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S E V E R A L
DISCOURSES:

C O N C E R N I N G

The Shortness of Humane Charity.
The Perfection of the Mercy of God.
The Difference of Times with respect to Religion.
The Joy which the Righteous have in God.
The Secret Blasting of Men.
The Instructive Discipline of God.
The Danger of Unfaithfulness to God.
The Malignity of Popery.
The Deceitfulness of Sin.
The Conversion of a Sinner.

A L S O,

The Prayer used before Sermon.

By the Reverend and Learned, *K*
BENJAMIN WHICHCOT, D.D. *Whichcot*

S O M E T I M E

Minister of *S. Lawrence Jewry, London.*

Examined and Corrected by his own Notes; and
Published by **JOHN JEFFERY, D.D.**
Archdeacon of *Normich* *3 L R*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *James Knapton* at the Crown in
S. Paul's Church-Yard. 1701.

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S E V E R A L

DISCOURSES

CONCERNING

The Principles of the Christian Religion
The Foundation of the Moral Law
The Difference of the Christian Religion
The Power of the Christian Religion
The Security of the Christian Religion



The British Museum, London

By the Reverend and Learned
BENJAMIN WILKINSON, D.D.

220, WHITE

MINSTER, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON.

Examined and corrected by his own Notes; and
Published by JOHN JENNINGS, D.D.
Archdeacon of Norwich

LONDON

Printed for James Knapton at the Crown in
St. Paul's Church-yard, 1701.

To the Honourable

Sir PAUL WHICHCOT

Knight and Baronet.

SIR,

YOU being the Chief of that Family, from which the Doctor receiv'd Honour, by his Extraction; and to which he did Honour, by his Worth; I could not find any one more fit to whom I might Dedicate these Discourses of his, than your self.

I am well assured that no greater service can be done to Religion, than to make Publick, True, Wise
and

Epistle Dedicatory.

and Honourable Representations of it;
such as are contained in the following
Sermons.

To the Honourable

For the Reverend and Learned Author, through the Advantage of just Freedom, a strong Judgment, and an unfeigned Piety, has established such a Notion of Christianity from the Holy Scriptures, according to the Moral Perfections of God, as cannot possibly be false, and has laid his Foundation of Religion so deep in the Nature, Reason, and Necessity of Things, that it cannot possibly be subverted.

After the great Design of doing Service to the Interest of Religion, and the Souls of Men, my Care has been to do Right to the Author's Memory; and I hope the Publick will take in comparing

Epistle Dedicatory.

being, copied, and corrected, what
I have published, by this short
Notes, will secure me against the
Suspicion of Neglect in that Mat-
ter.

The Nature of the Discour-
ses, recommend I them effectually
to every one, that is a compe-
tent Judge: Such an one was
the late most Reverend Arch-Bi-
shop Tillotson, who on all Occa-
sions expressed a very high Esteem
of the Reverend Author.

This Account I give of my
Undertaking, for you whose Name
I have taken the liberty to use
in this Dedication: and as 'tis
my Veneration for the Author
which induceth me to inscribe his
Labours to you, so I trust, you
will, on his Account, to whom
I was not unknown, accept the
Respect

Epistle Dedicatory.

Respect which is designed, and
pardon the Liberty which is taken
by, *Quia in eorum libris
notis, will secure me against
Suspicion of Neglect in that Mat-*

The Nature of the Dedication
S I R
For, *in every one, there is a com-
mon Sense: Such an one never
the less most Reverend Arch-Bi-
shop Tillotson, who on all Occa-
sions of the Reverend Ministry*
Your most Humble Servant

*This Dedication I give of my
own free Will, and not in any
I have taken the liberty to use
in this Dedication: and as the
Author for the Dedication
will likewise be to himselfe his
Dedication to you, so I trust, you
will, on this Account, be willing
to accept the Dedication
Respect*

JOHN JEFFERY.

THE CONTENTS.

Discourse I.

THE Shortness of Humane Charity.

JONAH iv. 1. 2.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said. I pray thee, O Lord; was not this my saying, when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before thee unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the Evil. Pag. 1.

Discourse II.

The Perfection of the Mercy of God.

JOEL iii. 13.

And rent your Hearts, and not your Garments; and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and

The Contents.

and of great kindness, and repenteth him of
the evil. Pag. 29.

Discourse III.

The Difference of Times, with respect to
Religion.

PSAL. xc. 7.

— To day if ye will hear his voice, barden
not your hearts. Pag. 51.

Discourse IV.

The Joy which the Righteous have in
God.

PSAL. xxxiv. 8.

Rejoyce in the Lord O ye Righteous for
praise is comely for the Upright. Pag. 83.

Discourse V. VI. VII.

The Secret Blasting of Men.

When thou with rebukes dost correct Man for
Iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume
away like a moth: Surely every Man is vanity.
Pag. 118, 123, 151.

The Contents

Discourse VIII.

The Instructive Discipline of God.

J E R. vi. 8.

*Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul
depart from thee: lest I make thee desolate,
a Land not inhabited.* Pag. 177.

Discourse IX.

The Danger of Unfaithfulness to God.

H E B. iii. 12.

*Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of
you an evil Heart of unbelief, in departing from
the living God.* Pag. 225.

Discourse X.

The Malignity of Popery.

J A M. iii. 18.

*And the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in
Peace of them that make Peace.* Pag. 247.

Discourse XI.

The Deceitfulness of Sin.

H E B. iii. 13.

*But exhort one another daily while it is called
to day, lest any of them be hardened through the
Deceitfulness of Sin.* Pag. 279.

Dis-

The Contents.

Discourse XII. XIII. XIV. XV. XVI.
The Conversion of a Sinner.

E Z E K. XVIII. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive. Pag. 303, 321, 345, 367, & 391.

E R R A T A.

P Age 16. line 26. read of p. 33. l. 23. r. abundat in.
p. 47. l. 27. r. p. 52. l. 9. r. later. p. 54.
l. 24. r. *de quibus*. p. 67. l. 15. r. first. p. 78. l. 11. r.
early. ibid. l. 15. r. the Lord. p. 140. l. 5. r. fruitful.
p. 144. l. 6. r. vulnera. p. 145. l. 10. r. abenew. p. 125.
l. 3. r. and. p. 160. l. 11. r. bitter things. p. 193. l. 14. r.
should be. p. 195. l. 11. r. *de* significat. ibid. l. 13. r.
cohibere. p. 385. l. ult. r. Temper.

rection, we shall be exposed to all manner of Evils; for these are as a Damme, which once being broken down, all Evils will flow in upon us. For *beginnings of Sin are like the letting in of mighty Waters*, which at the first might have been prevented; but if once it hath got over, twenty times as much will not stay it. So it is in Sin; while a Man retains his Innocence, there is a Modesty and Ingenuity upon his Mind, and that will be his Preservation; but if once a Man, either by gross neglect, or voluntarily doth consent to Iniquity, and so betray himself, he doth incur a Forfeiture of God's Protection, and cast away that which is his greatest Security and Defence. And this is the true account of that great Impudence and Immodesty that many Sinners arrive unto. For our better Security let us consider.

1. That it is much easier to Prevent, than to Restrain Sin, and to recover a Man's self. 'Tis easier a great deal not to consent to Sin, than to lay any limits upon ones self.

2. Let us be very *wary* and *cautious* of approaching Evil; while we are upon our Legs, and are our selves, let us be Jealous and Cautious of approaching Evil.

C

3. Let

Vol. I. 3. Let us have no *Self-confidence*; let us not Arrogate to our selves, as if we were Self-sufficient; but know that our *Sufficiency is of God*, whose strength is sufficient for us in our Weakness. And these are the Advantages that I make of *Jonah's Distemper*.

Now to proceed. It is pity that that should be true, which *Jonah* would have, That a Sinner should in any state be incapable of Repentance; even after Denunciation of Judgment: or that Repentance should not at any time take effect, and this *Jonah* would have had. It were a thousand pities it should be so, for it would prove the undoing of the World, and the worst News that could be brought from Heaven unto Men; That there should be an incapacity of Repentance in any state of Sin whatsoever; or that Repentance in any case, at any time, should prove successless and ineffectual; and yet, this is that which *Jonah* would have had. And he is a great deal the more to blame, because he is wilful in his Distemper: for in the Text we find, that *Jonah* knew before hand, that if they did Repent, God was so Gracious and Merciful, that he would revoke his Sentence, and therefore he tells him, that

that he was unwilling to go out of his Disc. I.
Country. For I knew that thou wast a
Gracious and Merciful God, and repentest
thee of the Evil.

1. Observe here, Friends, how Passi-
on transforms a Man; how madly doth
Jonah argue, even in the presence of
God himself! But,

2. Observe how Selfishness doth nar-
row and contract a Man's Spirit, Jonah
considers nothing; Sixscore thousand
are nothing to be Sacrificed for the
maintaining of his Credit: See then
what a wretched thing 'tis to the World,
a Selfish Spirit.

3. Observe hence, That Sin is the
cause of Judgment. For God's Denun-
ciation against the Ninevites, is caused
by their Provocations.

4. Observe, That there is no stay at
all in the way of Sin; for Jonah still
goes on from worse to worse. He that
begins in Sin knows not where he shall
end.

5. Take notice from hence, That Re-
pentance doth alter the case. I knew, that
Thou wert a God gracious and merciful,
and repentest Thee of the Evil. 'Tis ne-
cessary to our Safety and Preservation
to give up our selves to God's Guidance

Vol. I. and Government, Let us keep our selves in God's hand, and live in a daily belief of our dependence upon God, and be always sensible of our own Weakness and Infirmitie; and so to think of *Jonah's* Miscarriage, as to make us modest and humble, and to depend upon God continually. He that will live according to his own Will, or have his Will unsubdued, and unresigned up to God, he will not be safe. Lust unmortified doth precipitate the humour, and useth a Man as a Slave, and by it he is intoxicated. Humour is an upstart and perfect Rebel against the Sovereignty and Authority of Reason.

Further, observe in this Story of *Jonah*, how God deals with Man to bring him to a right Mind, when he finds him in his Distemper. God here deals with *Jonah* by reason, and by Argument. *Thou hadst pity upon the Gourd: should not I have compassion upon Sixscore thousand Persons, amongst which there are many that through infirmity and nonage, are not able to know their right hand from their left?* God applies to our Faculties, and deals with us by Reason and Argument: Let us learn of God, and deal with one another in Meekness and Calmness of Spirit,

Spirit, and know, that *the reason of our Mind is the best tool we have to work withal*: and no Man's Sayings to another are valuable further then he brings Reason for what he says, and gives an account of himself in a rational way. We cannot do any good by Peevishness and Exasperation. *The Righteousness of God is not attained by the Wrath of Man*; Jam. 1. 20. You see how God deals with *Jonah*, by Reason and by Argument.

Then further, it is said, ver. 2. *That Jonah prayed unto God, and said, Was not this my saying when I was yet in my Country*, &c. A strange kind of Prayer this was; for indeed he rather Quarrels with God then Prays unto him. In Prayer let us take care of two things.

1. That our Mind be in a *Praying Temper*.

2. That we offer to God in *Sacrifice Prayer-matter*. Let us look to the temper of our Spirits, and the government of our Minds, and our due Intention. You see Truth for the matter, may be False for the manner. He brings this for an Argument, that *God was merciful*; this was true for the matter: But a strange Argument for that which *Jonah* would

Disc. I

Vol. I. would plead for by it. The Devil spake truth in the Scripture sometimes, but always for ill purpose. That which *Jonah* would have had, would have undone him, and all the World besides. Sometimes we wish and pray for our harm. Let us submit our Prayer to God, 'tis sometimes better that God should not answer us in what we pray for.

You see upon reading these Words, a Man would not imagine the case as we find it. For here we have a Person of Eminent Privilege; *Jonah*, who lived before other of the Prophets (the certain time not certainly known) of all the Prophets a *Type of Christ*. The Prophet, *Isaiah* is called the Evangelical Prophet, for that he spake concerning the Kingdom of Christ very clearly: But *Jonah* had the advantage of being the Type of Christ. An Extraordinary Person, a Prophet, a Type of Christ; yet a Man exceedingly displeased, and very angry, and that without any cause at all. For if you consider these two things, you aggravate *Jonah's* Distemper beyond measure.

I. The Person with whom he is displeased.

2, The

2. The *cause for which* he is displeased. Disc. 1.

1. The *Person with whom* he is displeased; and that is with God himself. He in whom all Souls delight; He in the enjoyment of whom we have Hearts-ease and Satisfaction, and whom to enjoy is Happiness and Eternal Life. The Light of whose Countenance is better than Life it self. Now *Jonah* is offended with God himself.

2. The *cause* of his Offence. He is offended with God's Goodness, he is offended with Sinners Repentance; he is offended that Repentance doth take effect. Was ever a Man offended in this manner? Behold here the infirmity of Humane Nature! Let no Man be Self-confident or Presumptuous: Let every Man's Mind be cloathed with Modesty, and dwell in Humility. Let us all fear our selves, and live in the sense of our dependance upon God. What prodigious Creatures we are, if we fall into Distemper? How monstrously may we misunderstand our selves? And this is not only manifest from the case of *Jonah*; but is universally acknowledged. St. *James* speaks of *Elias*, that extraordinary Person, *Jam. 5. 17.* That he was a Man

Vol. I. *subject to like Passions with other Men.*
 And so Acts 14. 15. Paul and Barnabas,
 when in the exercise of their Commis-
 sion, so behaved themselves, that the Peo-
 ple were ready to Deify them: But
 they acknowledged themselves to be
 Men, of *like Passions* with them.

Since then all is not true Reason that
 takes place in the Lives of the very best
 of us, it is to be wished, that we would
 be no where Peremptory, no where
 Self-pleasers, that we would not be
 Dogmatical and Self-assuming; that we
 would not Judge and Censure one ano-
 ther; that all our Passions would display
 themselves in Tenderness and Compassi-
 on. In so doing we should represent
 God himself. Psal. 103. 8. *The Lord*
is merciful and gracious, slow to anger,
&c. Isa. 49. 15. *As a Father pitieth*
his Children, so the Lord pitieth them
that fear him.

See then that you keep out of Passion,
 if you would not shamefully miscarry;
 and if you be in a Passion never believe
 your selves; or be confident of any
 thing you did, if not in calme Reason.
 If in Passion, review and examine, and
 when calme consider and rectifie that
 which you did amiss: You see you have
 Reason

Reason from the miscarriage of *Jonah*. Disc. I.

'Tis strange that a Man should be angry and displeased with God; yet thus far did his Passion draw him. Let us from hence know how frail and subject to Infirmary we are. That ever it should come into the head of a Man to be aggrieved that there is place for Repentance! and that God should pardon upon Repentance! and that God should give over to punish when Men repent! One would think, we should be Merciful for our own sakes. Was not *David* rash in Judgment when *Nathan* represented in a Parable what he himself had done? He passed a Sentence that he would not have had executed. That we may not forsake our own Mercies, and pass Judgment upon our selves: Let us be very cautious and deliberate, and easie to make candid Constructions of other Mens Actions. Then how unreasonable is it to be aggrieved at God's Goodness, at Sinners Repentance? If a Man be once out of the use of Reason, there is no bounds to Unreasonableness; once out of the way of Reason, who knows what will be or how far a Man will go? How desperate a thing it is in *Jonah*, that he would have this stand upon Record in Holy Scripture,

Vol. I. Scripture, That God did refuse to give
 ~~~~~ Sinners Repentance, and when they had  
 repented he did refuse to accept them; and  
 yet this *Jonah* would have had upon  
 Record; clean contrary to the dealings  
 of God. For we find, when *Abab* (who  
 was a Person that had sold himself to  
 do Wickedness) did but repent and  
 humble himself, God promisseth, that  
 the Evil should not come in his days. But  
 by *Jonah's* consent, God should not give  
 way to Repentance.

But you will ask, Wherefore do I ble-  
 mish the Reputation of a Prophet, of a  
 Type of Christ?

I answer, Whatsoever is upon Record  
 in the Scripture is for our Admonition;  
 we look upon him now, how he acts in  
 his Distemper, not to cry him down, but  
 by his loss, to give our selves advan-  
 tage. Let us in this Instance see our own  
 Weakness and Infirmary, and be modest  
 and humble. Let us not brag of our  
 own Reason and Wisdom: Let us all  
 know, That we are safe only in God's  
 hands; and that if we incur a Forfeit-  
 ure of God's Protection, we may ex-  
 tremely miscarry, as we may see in this  
 Instance of *Jonah*.

Let

2. Let us *preserve our Innocence*, and Disc. I. fear to fall into Passion, beware of running into such heat and distemper of Mind.

3. Take care of *Selfishness* and Narrowness of Spirit: The narrowness of *Jonah's* Mind, who so much valued his Credit of being a true Prophet; that the safety of so many Thousands seem'd nothing in his Eye; though herein he contradicted the very Nature of God, and his own knowledge. For saith he, *I knew that thou wert gracious*, &c. And also it was contrary to the express Declarations that God had made; That though he should denounce against Sinners, and commissionate a Prophet to declare the particular Judgment; yet he is not bound to bring the Judgment upon that Place or Persons, against whom he had denounced them, if the case of Repentance doth intervene.

2. Let us put on our armour, and Disc.

to fill into Prison, bewails of sin-  
ning men such hard and different of  
Mind.

3. Take care of Selfishness and Var-

iousness of Spirit: The narrowness of

Yours Mind, who is much valued his

Enriched being a true Prophet: that the

latter of so many Thousands seem'd no

being in his Eye; though herein he

commended the very Name of God

and his own knowledge. For thus he

saith: I have seen many who are

also it was contrary to the spirit's Deba-

ration that God had made: That though

he should denounce against sinners and

condemnation, a Prophet to declare the

righteous Judgment: yet he is not

bound to bring the Judgment upon that

Place of Persons, as though he had

denounced them, if the will of God

saith both intercession and judgment.

Thus saith the Lord: I will have

mercy upon them that are poor and

lowly, and will bring down the high

and will bring down the high

and will bring down the high

and will bring down the high



## DISCOURSE II.

The Perfection of the Mercy of God.

JOEL ii. 13.

*For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil.*

**A**lthough I have changed my Text, Disc. II. I have not left my Argument; and I have done it for this end: In *Jonah* we find the self same Words, but to a very unnatural use. By these Words *Jonah* would justify himself. I therefore purposely left that Prophet, because I would not further enquire into his Distemper. Though it is of great use, that *Jonah* reports thus of God, who would not have it so. The Advantages that I have made are these,

*First*, That by taking notice of the miscarriage of so eminent a Person, that he should so fail and miscarry; we may thereby

Vol. I. thereby see the frailty of Humane Nature. And this should teach us to be modest and humble, and to live in a daily sense of our dependence upon God. *Moses*, the meekest Man upon Earth, stands upon Record, that he spake unadvisedly with his Lips.

*Secondly*, *Jonah's* Distemper represents to you the danger of Passion; how *Jonah* misbehaves himself to God, how injurious and uncharitable to Man, when in a Passion! It is not safe for any Man to believe himself, or to trust himself, if in a heat. Beware therefore of running into heat and distemper of Mind.

*III. Third* The *third* Advantage that I make is, to recommend the Spirit of the Gospel, it is always to be found in a Spirit of Love. Our Saviour, living and dying, was always in a Spirit of Love; and the first Martyr *St. Stephen*, he exactly writes after his Copy, *Acts* 7. 60. And he cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this Sin to their charge. Wherein he doth much exceed the Testimony in the Old Testament, by *Zachariah*, who saith, The Lord require it at their hands. I cannot say, but *Zachariah's* Prayer was just, but *St. Stephen's* was gracious. These things are upon Record for our instruction; therefore

therefore we are to take notice of them, Discretion  
to make us wary, lest we our selves be  
over taken; and to make us tender-spi-  
rited, out of the sense of our own Fal-  
libility.

This for a reason why I take notice  
of *Jonah's* misbehaviour.

I now follow this Prophet, For he is  
*gracious and merciful, &c.*

When God passed by *Moses*, he made  
this Declaration of himself, *Exod. 34. 6.*  
*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and*  
*gracious, long suffering, abundant in good-*  
*ness and truth, &c.* And in *Psal. 86. 5.*  
*Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive.*  
And in *Psal. 112. 4.* *He is gracious and*  
*full of compassion.* In these places of  
Scripture you have, either all these  
Words, or as much said of God. And  
indeed nothing is more true of God, then  
that he is the *first and chiefest good*; his  
prime Perfection is Goodness, and our  
truest Notion of him is, that he is *Al-*  
*mighty Goodness.*

For what I have further to say, I  
shall observe this Method.

1. I shall speak in point of *Vindicati-*  
*on*, and give satisfaction to *Objections*  
that arise against this great Truth.

2. I



Vol. I. 2. I shall make *Explication* of the several Phrases in the Text.

3. Proceed to *Confirmation* of it by satisfactory Argument.

4. To matter of *Caution*.

5. And lastly make some *Application*.

(1.) For *Vindication*. There are *Three Objections* to be removed, and then the Heart of Man cannot object any thing against this Representation of the Divine Goodness.

(1) The several *Instances* of *Severity*, represented to us in Scripture, and in other Stories.

(2) Some Scriptures represent God very *Terrible*.

(3) The necessity of *Justice*. For as some imagine, it is indispensable, and of absolute necessity that Sin be Punished.

(1) For the several *Instances* of God's *Severity* in the Scripture, which seem contrary to this Goodness and great Kindness of God to Man. We have the

Instance of the Deluge, wherein all Mankind (except some few) were swept away with the Flood. The Instance of the Seven Nations which God commanded to be destroyed. The *Israelites* when brought out of *Egypt*, led up and down

the

Gen. 6.

Deut. 7.

23. 24.

Numb. 14.

22.

Deut. 1. 35.

the Wilderneck, and at last consumed. *Disc. II.*  
*Nadab* and *Abihu*, for their inadverten- *Lev. 10.*  
 cy, in offering strange Fire; were con- *1, 2.*  
 sumed by Fire. *Uzzah*, in his good  
 will, meddling with the Ark without *1 Chron.*  
 God's expresse command, smitten dead. *13. 9. 10.*  
 Five hundred of the *Bethshemites*, that  
 rejoyced at the return of the Ark from *1 Sam. 6.*  
 the *Philistines*, slain suddenly for look- *19.*  
 ing into it. The Instance of the Deso-  
 lation of the *Jewish Nation*. *Ananias* *Mat. 24.*  
 and *Saphira* who were great Benefactors *Josephus de*  
 to the Church, reserving part of what *belto Juda-*  
 they sold to the use of the Church, were *ico.*  
 punished with sudden Death. *Herod* *Act. 5. 1,*  
 who took the applause of the People *&c.*  
 to himself, dyed a most dreadful Death. *Act. 12. 23.*  
 And the dreadful Destruction of *Sodom*  
 and *Gomorah*. To which I answer in *Gen. 19.*  
 several Propositions. *24.*

1. It is enough to be gracious, not to *Nunquam*  
 be wanting in Necessaries, for any ones *deficit in*  
 good: And he that doth so, may abound *necessariis;*  
 in his Courtesies as he himself pleaseth. *sed abunda-*  
 When Necessaries for our good are af- *lim gratui-* *tin*  
 forded, and by any neglected, the blame *tis pro ar-*  
 lies upon them. *bitrio suo:*

2. Sometimes the Sins of Nations and *Jer. 51. 13.*  
 of Persons are come to their height, and  
 God forced to punish.

D

3. The

Vol. I. 3. The Judgments of God in this Life are *exemplary and disciplinary*; and better a mischief should fall on particular Persons, then that a general inconvenience should follow.

Luk. 13. 3.  
5. and 1  
Cor. 10. 6.  
11.  
*Hic ure, hic  
seca Domi-  
ne, modo  
parcas in  
eternum.*

4. God sometimes lets us feel something of Hell here, to prevent it hereafter. Chastisements are exercises of Vertue, not effects of Vengeance, *Heb. 12. 10, 11.*

5. There may be a particular account given in several Cases.

I will single out the hardest. As to *Nadab and Abihu, Uzzab and the Bethshemites, Annanias and Saphira*; to these particular Reasons may be given.

When *Nadab and Abihu* sinned, the *Mosaical* Institution was but newly set up. And when *Annanias and Saphira* sinned, the Gospel Institution was New. Now when a new Law is set up, there is severe inflicting of Punishment in case of Transgression. For if Authority should suffer it to go unpunished, it would be understood and thought an allowance of it; and therefore did God so severely punish these *first Transgressions* of his new Institutions. Then, as for *Uzzab and the Bethshemites*, we must consider, that God had severely plagued the



the *Philistines* (when the Ark was in *Disc. II.* their Hands) with Emerods in their secret parts; and they, not acquainted with the Religion of the Ark; therefore surely he would not pass by and overlook *Ozab* and the *Bethshemites* who did know it. It cannot be imagined, that God would allow a Rashness and Absurdity in *them*, having so severely punished the *Philistines* before.

6. Though we do not know what time or leisure God will allow to Sinners to Repent, yet we certainly know God will grant Forgiveness to Penitents; which is enough to declare God Gracious and Merciful.

7. If it be not the case of Repentance, there is no other way for God's forgiveness; for this is the Tenour of the Grace of God, (*Acts 11. 18.*) Repentance unto Life. *Acts 5. 31.* Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins. *Luke 24. 47.* And that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name. I cannot expect the subsequent act of Forgiveness, where there is not the Antecedent act of Repentance, and Conversion, and Reformation. For what we

D 2

have

Vol. I. have done amiss, and do not recal by Repentance, we are thought to stand to.

8. We cannot competently judge concerning the Proceedings of God to his Creatures, when taken in Iniquity; because we are not privy to the Spirit in which Men Sin. This for Answer to the *first Objection*.

The *Second Objection* is relating to such Scriptures as represent God *severe*, by giving up to a Reprobate sense, Stupidity and hardness of Heart, &c. Psal. 69. 23. *Let their Eyes be darkned, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.* And Rom. 11. 10. *To give an account of these places in short, see but against what Persons these are spoken; Persons that were contumacious, and resolved to go on in an evil way. And where there is this case of wilful sinning persued with Impenitency and Contumacy; in this case I must say two things.*

1. This Case hath no Promise. And

2. It is not fit for the exercise of Grace and Mercy.

1. It hath no Promise of God, For the Grace of the Gospel runs in this strain; *Repentance unto Life, Repentance*  
and

Act. 11. 18.

*and Remission of Sins*: Never Remission Disc. II.  
promised without Repentance; and this is the Tenour of the Grace of the Gospel.  Luke 24.  
24.

2. This Case is not fit for the exercise of Grace and Mercy; for this Case is not Compassionable. For this Sinner would not have God to disturb him; he would be let alone, he makes no Application to God at all; he doth not desire to be beholden to him. Now God cannot be said to be wanting, though in this case he leaves Men to their own Hearts Lusts, because it is to them according to their own Hearts desire. For these Sinners desire not the knowledge of God's ways; they choose the Pleasures of Sin, whatever follows upon it.

But if any shall say, or think, God may if he please, by an irresistible Power, prevent all Sin and Misery: I answer. Is it reasonable, that God, having made intelligent and voluntary Agents, should force them, and make them do either this or that; so or so; whether they will or no? See what will follow.

1st. There would be no exercise of Vertue, for all Vertue is in choice. 2dly. No. Happiness, for we should be under



Vol. I. force and constraint. 3dly. Of what use would our Natural Faculties then be. 4thly. It would alter the very State of God's Creation. It could be no Probation State; and it is the contrivance of Wisdom, first that we should Work, and then have a Reward. 5thly. God hath made us of Natures to be otherwise dealt withal. God draws with the Cords of a Man, viz. Perswasion and Instruction; and if God draws, it is expected we should follow him. God works with us, and it follows that we should work out the affairs of our Salvation with Care and Diligence. This gives you an account of some Scriptures, whereat some may stumble. As that of God's hardning Pharaoh's Heart. Pharaoh goes on wilfully and impenitently to sin against God, and resolves to be Stubborn; and God withdraws upon Provocations; and with-holds his Grace, and lets him alone; and this is called the hardning of Pharaoh's Heart. When Men affect to be Arbitrary and Lawless; God leaves them to their own Hearts Lusts, and gives them over to vile Affections. And this is the case accounted for in Isa. 6. 9, 10. Go and tell this People, hear ye indeed but understand not, and see ye indeed but

*Voluntas sequitur dictamen Intellectus. Meliores ducit amor. Τὸ πρῶτον ἐπιφέρει.*

*ἵνα ἐκβατίζῃ, not αἰτιατικόν. St. Chrysost. Consequential, not Intentional,*

*but perceive not. Make the Heart of this* Disc. H.  
*People fat, and their Ears heavy, and shut*  
*their Eyes, least they see with their Eyes,*  
*and hear with their Ears, and understand*  
*with their Hearts, and convert and be hea-*  
*led.* And this is referred to six times in  
the New Testament, viz. Matt. 13. 14.  
and Mar. 4. 12. and Luk. 8. 10. and  
Joh. 12. 40. and Acts 28. 26. and Rom.  
11. 8. Not that this is spoken Prophe-  
tically, but spoken by the Prophet first,  
and by the Evangelists and the Apostle  
afterward, referred to the Prophet in the  
like cases. For this is only what is con-  
sequent upon Men's disobediences; no-  
thing was antecedently intended by  
God. But to justify God in this case,  
two things I lay down. 1<sup>st</sup>. None are  
wicked through any neglect of God;  
but their own wilfulness. 2<sup>dly</sup>. None  
are Miserable by God's contrivance, but  
by their own Wickedness. So that God  
is free from the Blood of all Men, Our  
Destruction is of our selves; but our  
Salvation is of God. So that those Scrip-  
tures that represent God terrible, are  
in the case of Man's consenting to wil-  
ful Sin, and continuing Impenitent. God  
in this case, upon Provocation, gives  
Men up to their own Hearts Lusts.

Vol. I.

*Justitia est  
suum cuiq;  
tribuere:  
ergo Pecca-  
tori penam.*

Rom. 11.  
22.

Exod. 33.  
19.

Rom. 9. 15.  
Jer. 9. 24.

*Jus pena-  
rum Credi-  
toris est.*

For the 3d. Objection. The necessity of Justice in case of Sin. This will be resolved by a true explication of Justice. *God's Justice is the same with his Integrity and Uprightness.* Now these consist with the Reason of the thing, and the right of the Case: These are the Perfections of his Nature; from which no Action of God varies. But without prejudice to these, Scripture attributes to God Kindness and Severity; and these are limited and determined by his Will; in respect whereof 'tis said, *He will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and he doth exercise Loving Kindness and Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth.* Loving kindness, that is of Grace, the other two are of Justice. But in regard of the Loving kindness of God, *he is Master of his own Right;* and he doth as he pleaseth; for his Grace is free, and his Will is the Law to him; and it is apparent that he hath done differently; as in the case of Men and Angels. John 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.* And then for the Angels it is said, 2 Pet. 2. 4. *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them in to Chains*

of



of Darkness, to be reserved unto Judgment. In the one Case is his Loving-kindness, and in the other his Severity. He exerciseth Judgment according to the Law of his Nature: He exerciseth Loving-kindness according to the Law of his Will. Now to bring this home to the Case. I say, if God punish Sin where Sin is committed, it is just; God may justly do it, for Sin deserves Punishment. But we cannot say it is necessary that God should punish Sin; for if you say that, you take away God's Liberty, you destroy all Acts of Grace, you leave no room for Repentance. *Just, if it be done, but not just to be done;* for then it cannot be undone, but God must be unjust; and then God cannot Pardon. If we affirm the latter, we may make a Law for God. God may if he please remit and abate of his own Right; for every one that is an owner may dispose of his own if he will. They who receive not these things, I dare say, they are wanting to a solid Foundation of their own Faith. *It is Justice in God to do Men good, and it is Goodness in God to punish Sin if unrepented, saith Origen.*

Disc. II,

*Justum dicitur quod jure fieri potest: & quod jure fieri debet.*

*Justum si fiat. Justum ut fiat.*

*Quisq; potest cedere de jure suo.*

*Deus Justitia benefacit, & bonitate punit Origen.*

The 2d. thing in the Method of the Discourse is *Explication* of the several Phrases

Vol. I. *Pbrases* in the Text. In the Text you have *five* several Words; not that they denote several Perfections in God, but expresse Divine Goodness suitable to our Case, and Condition; the same in God, but distinguished to the quality of the Case.

*First*, He is *Gracious* ] which imports three things. *1st*. So as to do good freely, without constraint. *2dly*. Because he doth good, above the measure of right and just. *3dly*. Because he doth good, without antecedent Desert, or after-Remittance.

*2dly*. He is *Merciful* ] Take that also in three Particulars. *1st*. So as to compassionate his Creature in Misery. *2dly*. So as to help them, in respect of their Infirmities. *3dly*. So as to pardon their Iniquities.

*3dly*. He is *slow to Anger* ] and that also in three Particulars. *1st*. So as not to take advantage against his Creatures. *2dly*. So as to overlook Provocation. *3dly*. So as to allow space for Repentance.

*4thly*. He is of *great Kindness* ] Take that also in three Particulars. *1st*. What he doth, he doth in pure good will, and for our good. *2dly*. Not in expectation of

of being benefited by us. 3dly. It is infinite, not according to the Proportion or Disposition of the Receiver. Disc. II.

5thly. He repenteth him of the Evil ] Take that in four Particulars. 1st. So as either it comes not at all; Or 2dly. It proves not what we fear and imagine. Or 3dly. It stays but a while if it do come. Or 4thly. He turns it into Good. I give you but hints, and leave the rest to your Meditation.

A 3d. thing in the Method of the Discourse is Confirmation of the Truth of the Proposition in the Text. There are four Names and Titles given to God that make this out.

1st. His Creation in Infinite Goodness, Wisdom and Power. This speaks God to be full of Goodness; for Communication speaks Goodness in the Principle. The variety, order, and fitness of things to their ends declare the Wisdom of God. And to bring things together so remotely distant, *non ens* to *ens*, declare his Power.

2dly. Conservation, Protection, and Government, declare God to be Good, and full of Loving-kindness; in which respect God works, and we work; for we are all workers together with God.

3dly. Restu-



Vol. I. 3dly. *Restoration and Recovery* out of the state of Sin and Misery, speaks God's Goodness. When we were undone, when we had marred and spoiled our selves, God finds out a way for our recovery.

4thly. *Future Confirmation and settlement in Glory and Happiness*, the Miracle of God's Goodness, Wisdom and Power. These four things abundantly declare God Good and Gracious.

The 4th. thing in the Method of the Discourse, is matter of *Caution*, in two Particulars.

1st. Not to *abuse* this Declaration of Divine Goodness, either by holding Truth in Unrighteousness, or turning the Grace of God into Wantonness. *Having therefore these Promises (dearly Beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1.* Should we abuse his Goodness, it were to produce an effect contrary to the Principle.

2dly. Let there be no *hasty or rash Judgment*. If any thing seem harsh in the Dispensation of Providence, we may understand it in a little time; therefore he that believes should not make haste. We are in the Hands of a good God;

God; whatsoever the Appearance is, Disc. II.  
undoubtedly this Representation of God  
is true, viz. That *he is gracious and mer-*  
*ciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,*  
*and repenteth him of the Evil.* And al-  
though we cannot understand presently,  
in the Particulars, what God doth; yet  
it is undoubtedly true, that it is a mild  
and gentle Spirit, and loving to Mankind,  
that governs the World.

A 5th. thing in the Method of this  
Discourse is *Application.*

1st. Here is matter of *Information.*

Then have we a true Judgment of God,  
when we think of his Greatness in con-  
junction with his Goodness. Never di-  
vide his Almightyness from his Good-  
ness. It is very true, *No true Majesty*  
*without Goodness:* yea I dare say it, It is  
the greatest act of Power, to Commise-  
rate and Pardon; for other acts of  
Power subdue things without; but he that  
doth Commiserate and Pardon, subdues  
himself, which is the greatest Victory.  
General good Will, and Universal Love,  
and Charity, are the greatest, both Per-  
fections and Acts of Power. To be rea-  
dy to Forgive, and to be easie to be  
reconciled; are things that are grafted,  
not in the Wilderness of the World, but  
in

*An Deus  
fortis per-  
vertat Jus-  
titiam?*

Vol. 1. in the most noble and generous Natures.

They are under the fullest Communication of God, that give themselves up to Acts of Clemency and Compassion, and are forward to Relieve, and to do Good, to Pardon and to Forgive. These are the Persons that are endued with Divine Power. If Goodness and Righteousness were not in an unseparable Conjunction with Almighty Power, the whole Creation were in danger and hazard; and could not be safe, nor have any security.

*Quo Major  
eo placabi-  
lior. Emp.  
Motto.*

2dly. Here is matter of Imitation. Let us imitate and resemble God. Afford thy Fellow Creature that Measure that God doth thee; the contrary is an Argument of thy not partaking of the Divine Nature. *He that hateth his Brother abides in Death.* And how sayst thou, *That thou lovest God whom thou hast not seen, and lovest not thy Brother whom thou seest?* They who are indeed acquainted with God, and Naturalized to him, they live in a Spirit of hearty Love and universal good Will, 1 John 4. 16. *God is Love, and he that dwells in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The first thing in Religion is to have right Notions and Apprehensions of God, what  
is

1 John. 3.  
14.

1 John 4.  
20.



is true concerning God. For we shall never be right in our selves, if we have wrong thoughts of God. Therefore this is first in Religion to know what is true in God, and the next is to partake thereof, i. e. for us, in our measure and degree, to be what God is in fulness, height and excellency, wherein God is Imitable and Communicable.

Deo quip-  
sis. Ep. 5.  
1. and 1  
Pet. 1. 4.

3dly. Here is matter of Consolation to all that are willing to do well, and would be good. They are in the Hands of a good God; so that they may be encouraged, and their Hands strengthened in their duty. They have an Account to give to an equal Lord; they serve a loving Master. Who would not be engaged to such an one, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil? This is our great Encouragement, that faithfully serve God, that if there be a hearty good will on our part, and an honest endeavour to please God; so ample and abundant is the Grace of God, that it will supply all that is defective, either affording more Strength, or by candid Construction, or free Pardon of all our mistakes. If not by giving more strength, yet by candid Con-

Qui instat  
precepto,  
precurrit  
auxilio.

Vol. I. Construction of what is weakly done, but well meant; or by free Pardon. *God is far better than we can conceive of him.* For he is infinite in all his Perfections; and we are but finite in all our Apprehensions, and Conceptions of him. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. we are able through Grace to avoid evil and do good. And 3<sup>dly</sup>. Our Imperfections are easily pardoned; for *God pittieth us, as a Father pittieth his Children. He knoweth our frame, and considereth we are but dust.* Now this should quicken and enliven us cheerfully to obey God, and heartily to love him. I dare say, he doth not know God at all, as he is; nor is he in a good state of Religion; who doth not find in himself, at times, Ravishings with the sweet and lovely Considerations of the Divine Perfections, viz. his Benignity expressed to all his Creatures, and his Benefits conferred upon Mankind. He that hath not a sense and consideration of these, and on whose Mind these have made no impression, he is devoid of all true knowledge of God, and I dare say, he is not in a state of true Religion.

Psal. 103.  
14.

But what I now speak of is not to Impenitent and Contumacious Sinners; none of this reacheth them. To them there

there is no Promise, as I told you before; their case is not Compassionable. *Disc. II.*  
If we use our Principles of Reason, we cannot put it upon God, to act contrary to the Quality and Perfection of his Nature. The very Goodness of God doth oblige him to punish Impenitent and Contumacious Sinners; and to controul and discourage Sin; for if Goodness be the Perfection of the Divine Nature, then it is suitable to him, to promote Goodness in his Creation.

Thus have I run over these things only summarily, wherein I have done you this courtesy, I have given you matter for your Meditation.

---

E D I S-



there is no Promise, as I told you before, that  
there is not a Commission to  
I would not Principles of Reason, we  
cannot put it upon God, to be com-  
mitted to the Charity and Perfection of his  
Nature. The very Goodness of God  
does oblige him to supply the want  
and compensate sinners, and to  
convert and disengage sinners from  
Goodness to the Satisfaction of the  
the Father, then it is a sin to say  
to promote Goodness in his Creation.

This day I am over the  
 my testimony, which I have done  
 on this subject I have given you  
 and for you I have done

## DISCOURSE III.

The Difference of Times with respect to Religion.

PSAL. XCV. 7.

*To day if ye will hear his Voice  
harden not your Hearts.*

**T**O give my self Advantage, and to command your Attention; In the first place I will take notice how this place of Scripture is referred to, and quoted in the New Testament.

If you look into *Heb. 3. 7.* you will find these Words brought in, *As saith the Holy Ghost, To day if ye will hear his voice.* What therefore is said as consonant to them, you are to look upon, to receive, and entertain as the Word of God, and as dictated by the Holy Spirit. For the Words themselves, there is much matter in them, and they are

Vol. I of great Weight and Importance. But I will only declare to you in several Particulars, *That upon a Spiritual Account, there is great difference in Time.* For this is suggested, as that wherein the force of the Exhortation doth lye, *To day, &c.* And to make this out, I will shew you,

1. That *sooner and latter* are not alike, in respect of *Eternity*; and that the main Work we have to do in Time, is to prepare for *Eternity*.

2. I will shew, that *Times of Ignorance*, and of *Knowledge* are not alike.

3. That *before and after voluntary commission of known Iniquity*, are not alike.

4. That *before and after contracted naughty Habits*, are not alike.

5. That the time of God's *gracious and particular Visitation*, and the time when God *withdraws* his gracious Presence and Assistance, are not alike.

6. The flourishing time of our *Health*, and *Strength*; and the hour of *Sickness*, *Weakness*, and approach of *Death*, are not alike.

7. *Now and Hereafter*, *Present and Future*, *this World and the World to come*, is not alike.

And



And by that time I have given you Dis. 111.  
an account of these Particulars, and made  
it evident to you, That *all times are not  
alike*, for the purposes of Eternity, and  
the concernments of our Souls; it will  
appear highly adviseable (considering  
the Advantages of Life, Health, and  
Strength, and the reference of Time to  
Eternity) for us all to lead such Lives,  
upon which we may safely dye; and to  
employ our selves in such Actions as are  
accountable when we come to leave the  
World; since our welfare to Eternity  
depends upon it. We are, I say, high-  
ly concerned, so to order our Conver-  
sations in the World; so to govern our  
Spirits, and lead such Lives, as when  
we shall come to leave the World, we  
may reflect with satisfaction upon what  
we have done, as good *Hezekiah* did,  
*1 Kings 20. 3, 4.* When the Message  
came to him that he should dye and  
not live, he turned his Face to the Wall,  
and said, *I beseech thee, O Lord, to re-  
member now how I have walked before thee  
in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and  
have done that which is good in thy sight.*  
If we do not consider this, we shall be  
wanting to the true Interest of our Im-  
mortal Souls. We often read in Scrip-

Vol. I. *ture of Hardness of Heart*; which is nothing but want of Consideration: For *Mar. 6. 52.* we read, that *they considered not the Miracle of the Loaves, for their Heart was hardened.* And *Exod. 7. 23.* we read, that *Pharaoh did not set his Heart to consider things.* But briefly to speake to these Particulars.

*First*, *Sooner* and *Later* are not alike upon a Spiritual Account. For the time of Life is the day of Exercise, and time of Work for God; and for the Publick: for God and the Publick have a due of Service from us all; for we came not into the World to gratifie Sense, and to serve our Lusts, but to serve God and the Publick; not to promote our own Ends, and little Designs, but the common Good. And as we would not neglect our Duty, so we must not mispend our Time. We are to be doing our Duty to God, our selves and others, as soon as we come to the use of Reason and Understanding; for motion of Religion doth begin with Reason; and so soon as a Man is able to make use of Reason and Judgment, he ought to put himself upon motion of Religion. For we are as capable of Religion, as we are of Reason; and indeed no  
Man

9 *O. Lupa-  
des are  
always  
Bunglers.*

Man can use his Reason as he ought, Dis. III.  
 but Religion will be predominant with him, and over-rule all his Motions, Solomon saith, Prov. 16. 3. *That the hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, But how? if it be found in the way of Righteousness;* that is, if a Man hath used himself all his days, from the time he came to the use of Reason, to the time of old Age, in ways of Religion, his *gray hairs will be a Crown of Glory to him.* 'Tis of great advantage to begin well, for so saith Solomon, Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* 'Tis true indeed that some do degenerate; for these *Proverbs* are not to be taken strictly, but only to signify what is most common and likely, and what is to be expected; and *this* is of that nature; and doth shew a Man to be the greater Sinner, if he depart from a good way, that he was early brought into. For we easily do what we have been bred unto, and used to do. It is true that serious Repentance, wheresoever it is, doth alter the Case; but then you must know, that late Repentance is seldom true; and this I am very sure of, that there is little or no proof of late Re-

E 4

pentance,



Vol. I. penitance, because there is not opportunity to act. And they do mightily abuse themselves, that put off their Repentance with hopes of being like the *Penitent Thief*, who begun ill, but ended well. But pray consider, that this was an extraordinary Case, a miraculous Work of God's Grace; and such as we cannot expect the like again, till the Saviour of the World shall come again, and suffer. And the Apostle tells us, that there can be no more Sacrifice for Sin, then that which hath been already offered. Others there are that do abuse that Passage in the 20th. of *Matt.* where we read, that *the Lord of the Vineyard went forth to hire Labourers into his Vineyard, and took some at the last hour of the day.* But here I will observe four things.

*Penitentia  
sera raro  
seria.*

1. That they which were hired late, stood all that time in the Market-place in expectation.

2. They were no sooner hired, and appointed, but they went into the *Vineyard.*

3. They had no Plea at all for the Wages of a day. For it was said unto them, *I will give you what is right.*

Not

Not the Wages of a day: that was left *Dis. III.*  
wholly to the Lord's good pleasure. ~~~~~

4. It was *beyond their Expectation*, or at least beyond the common ground of expectation. And we find their Fellow-labourers were not satisfied in it, that *they* should have the Recompence of a days Work, when they had not done the Work of a day. Therefore let us not be so much mistaken, as to think we may defer the work of Repentance, and making provision for Eternity, till the last. They which do so, little understand what Sanctification imports; what Reconciliation with the Nature, Mind, and Will of God, and the Law of Heaven, doth signifie. No less then this can we understand by it, to glorifie God by a holy and unblameable Conversation, and to do good, and serve God in our Generations. For *Heaven is more a State and Temper, then a Place.* That for the first: *sooner and latter*, are not alike.

2. Times of Ignorance and of Knowledge, are not alike: For the time of Ignorance, that is as *the Night, in which, no Man can Work*, John 4. 4. And the Apostle tells us, *Acts 17. 30. That these times*

Vol. I. *times of Ignorance God winked at.* And that if they had been blind, they should have had no Sin, John 9. 41. which you are not to understand absolutely, that those that are Ignorant and Stupid are not Guilty; but that they are not so great Sinners as those which pretend to know. And therefore it is said, that *their Sin remaineth*, that is, it doth remain with all manner of Aggravation. For you cannot say more or worse of any Man, then that he doth Evil knowingly, and against his Conscience. It is universally acknowledged, that Ignorance doth greatly excuse, and therefore we have Charity for Idiots; and where Men have never heard, and are without the Pale of the Church, we leave them to God's Mercy, and conclude them not. But it is quite otherwise where Men are *a Law to themselves*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 2. 14*.

*Infidelitas  
negativa  
neminem  
damnat.*

*Ἐαυτοῖς  
νόμος.*

There are three things in which every Man that is born into the World, and hath the use of Reason, is a Law unto himself; and if he do not observe that Law in those Particulars, he will be self-condemned, and neither himself nor any other Man can justify him.



1. As to the point of *Sobriety* and *Dis. III. Temperance.* That we do moderate our Appetites, and not abuse our selves, through excessive and inordinate use of the things of this Life.

2. A Man is a Law to himself as to *Justice* and *Righteousness.* And he will be self-condemned if he do not use fairness and equal dealing with other Men: Such as he would himself receive from others, he is obliged to give. If a Man fail in these Particulars, he goes against the Law that is connatural to him, and would be self-condemned though he had no other Revelation from God, and had never heard of the Bible.

3. A Man is a Law to himself in respect of that *Fear* and *Reverence* which he owes to God. For a Man knows nothing more certainly, than that he was not original to his own Being, and that he did not make himself; but that he was brought into Being by some Agent, that was more Able, Wise and Powerful than himself. For he that knows how unable he is to continue himself in Being, cannot but know that he did not bring himself into Being, but that he owes his Being to another, and that he ought to Fear, Reverence, and Adore him

Vol. I. him from whom he received it; and if he do it not, he must condemn himself. Therefore I am sure there is no Man shall be condemned by God, that is not first condemned by himself, in some or other of these Particulars, that I have named. In some other, and *lesser matters*, there may be invincible Ignorance, and this may excuse in those Particulars; but in the great matters of Religion, and Conscience, there is no invincible Ignorance. If Men are at any loss as to these things I have named; their Ignorance is affected, and 'tis through gross self-neglect, and practice contrary to knowledge. And in these Cases their Guilt is aggravated, and their Case is not Compassionable. And that for the second. Times of *Ignorance*, and the times of *Knowledge* are not alike.

3. Before and after *voluntary commission of Sin*, is not alike upon a Spiritual Account. It is not imaginable the Loss that a Man sustains by consenting to Iniquity; how much he spoiles his Principle, mars his Spirit, and spoils his Parts. This you have acknowledged in the Counsel of *Achitopel*, which he gives to *Absalom*,

*Absalom*, which is called the *Good Coun-* Dis. III.  
*sel of Achitophel*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 14. Not  
 that it was good in it self, for it was as  
 wicked Counsel as ever was given: For  
 he adviseth *Absalom* to do a vile Fact, to  
 confirm himself in his Rebellion against  
 his Father, and to remove the Boundaries  
 of Good and Evil; then which there  
 is not a more desperate Undertaking.  
 For a Man under pretence of Power to  
 control the Rule of Right, the Measures  
 of Heaven; is to direct things from their  
 Natures, and to change their Natural  
 Course; which is as monstrous in Mo-  
 rals as in Naturals. The Mind uncor-  
 rupted is a tender thing, and suffers most  
 by Violence, and unnatural use. The Scrip-  
 ture speaks of hardness of Heart, as a  
 most monstrous State, *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can*  
*the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leo-*  
*pard his Spots.* These things are natu-  
 rally impossible. No more can one that  
 hath abused himself, and made havock  
 of Conscience, by accustoming himself  
 to do Evil; learn to do Well, without  
 the especial Grace and Favour of God.  
 The coming in of Sin is like the coming  
 in of Water: It may be stop'd by a  
 little Turff at the first; but if it once  
 find a way over, it breaks down all be-  
 fore



Vol. I. fore it. It is much easier to retain Innocence, than to recover a Man's self. If a Man will venture to do that which is not fit to be done, no body knows where he will end. The Practice of Iniquity makes Men shameless and impudent; the Devil is easily let in, but hardly got out. Let us

ὁ ἐν σοὶ δαίμων, Mark  
Ant. Lib. 2. Sect. 3.

ὁ ἐν σοὶ Θεός. Lib. 3.  
Sect. 5.

ὁ ἐκὰς ἡμῶν Θεός. Lib.  
12. Sect. 26.

ἡ συνείδησις Θεός.  
Animus humanus etiam  
nunc in corpore situs, δαί-  
μων nuncupatur. Apul: de  
deo Socratis. Justin. Mart.  
Apol. 2.

Θεὸς ἐν ὡμῷ.

therefore take heed how we betray our selves, and give way to Iniquity. Let us approve our selves to our Home-God. Conscience is always ready to speak to us; let our Ear be always ready to hear what it hath to say, and be very careful never to depart from its

Counsel, in going against the sense of our own Minds and Judgment. When once a Man hath consented to do that which is base and unworthy, as he hath made havock of his own Conscience, so he hath broken his Credit, which is a further Security, and great preservative against Evil.

4. Before and after contracted evil Habits, by frequent Use and repeated Acts of Evil, is not alike, as to the concerns

cerns of Eternity. Men are more what Dis. III.  
 they are used to, than what they are born  
 to; for Custom is a second Nature. Every Man hath himself as he useth himself. When Men lose all Government of themselves, they soon contract hardness and an injudicious Mind; an undiscerning Mind, or as it is rendred Rom. 1. 28. *Adversus*, a Reprobate Mind and Conscience. The Mind by abuse of it self, or gross self-neglect, may come to be as Salt that hath lost its Savour: So the Mind loses its power of Judging and Discerning, and of Reproving and Controlling. The Apostle speaks of some that had their Consciences *sear'd as with a hot Iron*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. by reason whereof they lose all Sense and Judgment; and then 'tis no wonder that nothing will work upon them, because as the Apostle speaks, Eph. 4. 19. *They are past feeling*. Which case is represented by the Prophet, Isa. 6. 9. *Make the Heart of this People fat, and their Ears heavy, that they may not hear*. And there is no place in all the Scripture so often referred to as this place; it is referred to by all the Evangelists, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistle to the Romans. And when this is the Case,  
 that

Κεκαυτη-  
 ειασμένοι  
 ὅτι σκευώθη-  
 σιν. 1 Tim.  
 4. 2.

Πεπωρω-  
 μένοι τὴν  
 καρδίαν.

Vol. I. that Men have grossly neglected or abused themselves, and brought themselves by wicked Practises into the love of Sin and Vice, and dislike of Goodness; then it comes to pass with them, that *seeing, they see not, and do not perceive, and hearing, they hear and do not understand.* And this place is no less then six times referred to in the New Testament, as giving an account of this place of the Prophet. We many times wonder to see Men act so contrary to all Advice and Counsel, to all sober Judgment, and to plain Scripture, against the true Interests of their Souls, and bodily Health, to the consuming of their Estates, ruin of their Credits, to the undoing of their Families, and all this without any manner of Profit or Advantage; so that a Man may say to them as the Apostle, *Gal. 3. 1: Who hath bewitched you?* To see Men run on so desperately, and to disclaim all Rules of Government, and to practise without any manner of Consideration: Not to be limited by Right and Justice; against all Advice and Counsel, against all Threatnings too, having neither the Fear of God, or Regard to Man: One would think they are besotted and act like Mad-men. But this is the



the Account : they have brought themselves into an unnatural Estate ; and are not now as God brought them into the World, nor like to continue so long here as they might have done. But as the Wise Man saith, *Eccl. 7. 17. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish, why shouldst thou dye before thy time ?* For want of Self-government the Wicked are like to dye before their time, and often by their own Hands too. How shall these Men give an Account of themselves, when they had a fairer allowance of time, and would not use it ? How odious are those that lay violent Hands upon themselves ? The Law doth not allow them the common place of Burial. Now all Intemperance is of the same Nature. Though Men do not intend it, yet they take a course to shorten their Days, and their Sin goes before hand unto Judgment. A Man would think that Rational Nature should not be so depraved ; but that we have woful experience of it. Inasmuch that the Prophet, *Jer. 6. 15. says of some, Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination ? Nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush.* All shame is laid aside, and that which

Vol. I. is the Governour of Man, *το ἀρχεμονικόν*, constituted by God: Reason and Understanding is dethroned, and brutish Sense set up in its stead, and Men give up themselves to Passion, Malice, Envy, Fury, and Revenge; and are Insolent, Arrogant, Haughty, and Unreasonable; whereas God made no such, nor ever brought any such order into the World. These Men came into the World upon the same terms with other Men; but they have made themselves such by abuse of themselves. And now they will tell you, they *cannot do otherwise*; they *cannot*; why? because they have contracted evil Habits, by ill Use, Custom, and Practice; and are not willing to be at the pains to work them off; which through the Grace of God, and by a little Violence to themselves at the beginning, they might effect.

5. The times of God's *gracious Visitation* in Mercy and Kindness to Men's Souls; these are not like those times wherein God *suffers Men to walk after their own ways*. And to make this out I propose three things.

I. That

1. That God is neither at first nor last, wanting in Necessaries to any of his Creatures, to save them harmless, and to bring them to Good. 

2. God doth never reject the endeavours of Repentance, nor cast off any true Penitent.

3. God doth not do always alike; nor can we in reason expect, but that if we trifle and dally with God, and consent to Iniquity, and refuse the Voice of God and of our own Conscience, and put our selves out of his Hand, that he should always attend the leisure of such Dalliers. Though neither at first, nor last, is he wanting in Necessaries, nor doth ever reject true Repentance; yet he will not wait our leisure. Therefore the times of God's Grace, and particular Visitation in Mercy and Kindness to the Souls of Men, these are far otherwise then *other times* are, and most fit for Men to return to God in, and to answer his Call. This is excellently described, *Job. 33. 14.* where it is said, *God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not. 15. By Dream and by Vision in the Night, i. e. to take them*  
F 2 from



Vol. I. from their evil ways. And when God does so, Men may hear, and turn to him; for the Grace of God is not in vain; but by the assistance which he doth afford Men, they are enabled, notwithstanding the impotency of their Nature, to do that which God calls them unto, and for which his Grace was afforded; if they do make use thereof, to the purpose for which he did afford it: And there is no doubt, but he will give more, as they improve what he first affords; *For to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, Matt. 13. 12.* Sometimes God doth visit us by some cross Providence; sometimes he doth frustrate evil Designs; sometimes he doth visit by Sickness, Diseases and Pain; and these are to be look'd on as God's awakening of us.

Now to make out my Observation, *That all times are not alike.* Was it alike with *Saul* when he was making havock of the Church, and haling Men and Women to Prison, that professed the Name of Christ; and when *Christ Jesus* appeared to him in a Vision from Heaven; saying, *Acts 9. 4. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* It was not alike with the Cripple, *Acts 3. 6.* when he lay

lay so many Years at the Gate, and *Dis. III.*  
 when *Peter* said unto him, *Rise up and walk.* It was not alike with him that  
 lay at the Pool so many Years, and  
 was not able to go in of himself, nor  
 to get any one to help him; as when he  
 was spoken too to *Rise up and walk,* *John*  
*5. 8. Elisha, 1 Kings 19. 19.* was but a  
 common Man till *Elijah* call'd him. The  
 Child might have continued dead long  
 enough, *2 Kings 4. 34.* had not *Elias*  
 stretched himself upon it. The *Beasts*  
 that were affected, *Gen. 7. 8, 9.* went  
 into the Ark, but the rest tarried abroad  
 and perished in the Flood. *Lazarus,*  
*Joh. 11. 43.* under our Saviour's Power  
 though dead four days, is brought to  
 Life again. When this Voice from God,  
*Eph. 5. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and*  
*arise from the dead, and Christ shall give*  
*thee Life,* is heard, the effect will fol-  
 low. There is a great deal of diffe-  
 rence between the day of God's Grace  
 and Power, and Man's Weakness and  
 Infirmities. Sometimes we are more  
 than Men through Divine Grace and  
 Assistance; other times we are less than  
 our selves. It was so with *David*; when  
 the Spirit of God was upon him, how  
 doth he *desie the Armies of the Aliens;*

Vol. I. but at another time, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.* A vast difference there is, when we are under Divine Motion, and when not; and therefore every Man ought when he is in a good Disposition, and well Affected, to follow those Impressions, for then that will be done which at another time will not be done.

6. There is a vast difference between the flourishing condition of *Life, Health and Strength*; and the hour of *Sickness, Weakness and Death*. In the former there is the Vigour of Nature; in the latter 'tis enough for a Man to bear his Infirmities. The most we can then expect to do, is to bear up against the Pangs of Death, and dismal Apprehensions of it. *And he is mad that bath a days work to do when he is going to Bed.* We see what great mischief came upon one's being late on his Journey, *Judg. 19.* The *Levite* being overtaken in the Night. We must know that the work of Conversion is a sober, serious and deliberate Work, and ought not to be deferred to Sickness and the hour of Death; which is an hour of haste, hurry and confusion. It is the greatest business



linels of Life, and of concernment to Dis. III. Eternity; and shall we prefer things that are Trifles in comparison, and bestow all our time, and thoughts, and care upon them, and leave that which is Fundamental to the State of Eternity to the last? especially considering,

*First*, That no Man is sure of warning, or of a moderate leasurely Sicknes. Some drop down all on the sudden, and never have the use of Reason to speak a Word; as they that dye of Apoplexies, Lethargies and the like. Many dye before either they themselves, or they that are about them, are aware. But if they dye not so soon, a Man may be *non compos mentis* through the height of his Disease. And if not so, there is very great danger of Despairing; if the Foundation of Hope be not laid before. For take it for granted, *There are none so much in danger of Despairing at the time of Death, as they which have been most Presumptuous in the course of their Lives.*

Again, the Enemy of our Souls, who hath been so ready to deceive us in life, will double his diligence at the hour of Death. So that, if we are not *now* able

Vol. I. to withstand his Temptations, how shall we be able to do it, when we shall have less Ability, and he come upon us with more Force and Violence.

Further, Sometimes Men expect assistance from Friends; but they may be absent when we want them, or they may prove like *Job's* Friends, miserable Comforters. But if this should be otherwise, it is then too late to begin a new Scene of Life, and learn the knowledge of Religion. For Knowledge is leisurely gotten, and with difficulty. But however, *that* is no time for Practice. If a Man could be made fit for it, and taught in a Moment, he hath no time to perform and exercise Religion. The Mind cannot be discharged of its ill Habits in a Moment, which have been settled by Conversation, and the work of a Man's Life.

7. And lastly, *Now* and *Hereafter*, the Present and the Future, this World and the World to come, are not alike; for the concerns of our Souls. For now is the time of working out our Salvation; the next World will be for Reckoning and in Judgment: As this Life leaves us,  
Eternity

Eternity will find us. See therefore **Dis. III.**  
what great Advantages we have in this day, and let us make use of them. We have the direction of Holy Scripture, which we may read as often as we will; We have Friends and Guides for the Instruction of our Souls; we have all God's Institutions and Appointments, and the Divine Spirits Assistance, and the Gospel Promises to assure us that our Applications to God shall not be in vain, if they be sincere. But then for *Hereafter*; what Word of Promise in all the Bible, for any thing that is to be done by us hereafter? What Scripture doth say, that that may be done hereafter which is now neglected? No. We read, *Prov. 1. 26. That because I called, and ye would not answer, I will then laugh at your Destruction, and mock when your Fear cometh.* And *Luke 16.* we read of the Rich Glutton, that he is Tormented; and Poor *Lazarus*, that makes an Advantage of his Poverty, and did his Work in this World, *he is Comforted.* If therefore we are real, sincere, and hearty in our Religion; we shall not put it off. Matters of Weight and Moment we do not put off at large; but we appoint a fit and convenient time;  
and



Vol. I. and if the thing be of Concernment,  
we will appoint a time near and certain,  
for delays and put-offs are next to de-  
nials.

From hence I infer,

1. That we are to discern the Time.
2. That we are to use the Time. And
3. That we are to recover the Time  
which is lost, or mispent.

1. That we are to discern the Time.  
This was wanting in them, Luke 12. 40.  
*Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the Fate of  
the Sky, and of the Earth; but how is it  
that ye do not discern this time? This,*  
as it argues Stupidity, so it is a fore-  
runner of Ruin. Luk. 19. 44. *They shall lay  
thee even with the Ground, and thy Chil-  
dren within thee, and they shall not leave in  
thee one Stone upon another, because thou  
knewest not the time of thy Visitation.*  
This is an account of Jerusalem's Doom.  
To know time and season in every Pro-  
fession and way of Living, is a prin-  
cipal piece of Skill. No good is to be  
done in any way, if this be not under-  
stood,

stood, Eccles. 3. 11. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time. And ver. 1.  Dis. III.

To every thing there is a Season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven. And the misery of Man is great, because he does not discern this time, Eccl. 8. 6. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of Man is great upon him. For the purpose of Religion, the time of Youth, and Natures strength; the time before Men are acquainted with Evil; the time of God's Assistance, Indulgence, Grace, and favourable Acceptance, are most proper. These make the time properly for working. Elder Years are attended with Weakness and Infirmities, which greatly indispose for Action; especially if we are to begin a new thing. This is rather a time of Patience and Passion, then of Work.

2. That we use the Time. That time is lost, that is not used. The virtue of it consists in the use of it. The true improvement of time is in the recovery of our selves by Reconciliation with God: Our Minds being renewed, our Losses supplied, and our Persons recommended. 'Tis an Argument of the severest

Vol. I. severest Reproach and Challenge, that a Man is at Years of Understanding, and yet his Mind is not informed: No Rule of Life and Action considered and examined. This is to moralize Solomon's Proverb, Prov. 24. 30. *I went by the Field of the Slothful, &c.* Every ones Mind is his Field, and the Slugards Mind is overgrown with Thistles. A Man may be ashamed to have lived so long in the World, to so little purpose; when his Time is gone, and his Work not done: Wise for other things, only uninstructed, or else careless in matters of the highest Concernment, and greatest Importance between God and their Consciences.

I may add that Time is burdensome, if we have not employment for it. We have a Phrase, *To drive away time*. Alas for its Consequence; *Ab hoc momento pendet Eternitas*. There is a reference of Time to Eternity. We should be sure to carry on our main Work with the Time; and if we be short in Circumstances, not to fail in Substance. Let nothing less then this be the account of the improvement of time, that our Minds are discharged of all unnatural Dispositions, whatsoever we have acquired



quired that jarrs with the Principles of Dis. HL. God's Creation in us; that we have gotten the victory of our Passions, taken our selves off from foolish Affections and fond Imaginations, from being carried away after the guise of this mad and sinful World: That our Faculties be planted with Divine Graces, Fruits of the Divine Spirit: That we be in Constitution and Temper, in Conversation and Practice; conformable to Christ's Doctrine, through Christ destroying in us the Works of the Devil, and communicating to us the Divine Nature: That our Persons be reconciled, pleasing, acceptable to God, through Christ's Mediation and Intercession. 'Tis a reproch to us to number our selves by Years, Fifty, Seventy, Eighty; These things being not done, in which the only true account of time is. Further I add by way of *Caution*, notwithstanding the difference of time.

1. I tell no Man (take him as I find him) that it is impossible for him to Repent; for I know not the extent of God's Grace.

2. I say to no Man, That if he does Repent it will be too late to find Mercy.

For

Vol. I. For I know not the length of God's Patience, and Repentance doth alter the Case. But this I seriously advertise. If we will be true to our own Souls, and not forsake our own Mercies, Let us take the advantage of God's particular Application to us; then act when God acts upon us. The Sacred Scriptures thus declare, Prov. 1. 23. *Turn ye at my Reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you.* Prov. 8. 17. *Whoso seeks me early shall find me.* Psal. 32. 6. *For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found.* Isa. 55. 6. *Seek ye Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* For this business of Religion is no slight or perfunctory Work; 'tis expressed in Scripture, by what imports a mighty Change, being made new Creatures, not by Transubstantiating our Natures, but by Transforming our Minds, and mending our Tempers; by being partakers of the Divine Nature; by being created after God in Righteousness and true Holiness; not by being Godhead with God, but by being renewed in the Spirit of our Minds. By perfecting Holiness in the fear of God. By crucifying the old Man and his Deeds. By purging our selves from all filthiness of  
the

the Flesh and Spirit. By putting off the body of Sin: And by mortifying the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts. Dis. III.

Can we reasonably think that such a Work can be done in a Moment, or in the most inconvenient Circumstances of Old Age, and the decays of Nature, or on a Death-bed? For is not Old Age burden enough, except it be attended with the sad remembrance of a careless Life?

3. Recover Time lost, so far as is possible, with double Industry, Care, and Diligence, *Eph. 3. 16.* upon this Encouragement, *Habenti dabitur*; To him that hath shall be given, and *ab utente non auferetur*, and from him that useth it shall not be taken away. Think that for this purpose, God hath so long continued thee in being. 'Tis safe to make the best Interpretation of God's dealing with thee, which is to encourage Application to him. For this is the contrary to turning the Grace of God into Wantonness. The credit of a good beginning is lost, if we persevere not in Goodness. The disrepute occasioned from the Vanity of the younger Years, is abated by the seriousness and stayedness



Vol. I. ness of the Age of Understanding. Since we cannot absolve our selves from any use or abuse of time past, considering the improveableness of time, and the reference thereof to Eternity: Let us carefully redeem that which remains; rescue it out of the Huckster's Hands; vindicate it to the noblest purposes: that the remainder of it through true Improvement, may answer the account of the whole.

Nothing will lye heavier upon our Minds, when we come to dye, then that we have neglected the day of Grace, been wanting to our selves in Preparations for Eternity, by bad use of time; depraved our Minds so as to go out of the World in far worse state and condition then we entred into it.

The *Persuasives* hereunto are,

1. That here is *Hearts-ease* and Satisfaction in the motion of Repentance; in that we have revoked, and morally avoided that which should not have been done. *The first best is not to have done ill; the second is to condemn it.* This is all we can do in the Case, all else must be left to God. And this makes the Case Compassionable; and when the Case

Case is such, there is nothing to hinder God to shew Mercy. *Dis. III.*

2. *Entrance into Eternity* mainly depends upon the immediate Disposition of the Mind. Wherefore we are to take all care to depart hence in Renunciation of the guise of this mad World; in Reconciliation with the Rule of Righteousness; in agreeableness of Temper with the Heavenly State.

3. We have done a great deal of *harm* in the World by bad Example, strengthening the Hands of the Wicked: Let us take it off by Renunciation of it, by condemning our selves in it, by giving Testimony to Truth and Right. This is the least that can be done in all reason: Else we may be said to be *alive to do mischief in the World, when we are dead and gone.*

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D I S.

81  
 And as for the Kingdom of Heaven  
 This is such, there is nothing to hinder  
 God to show Mercy

...a Father and Son  
 ...upon the immediate Disposition  
 of the Mind. Whence we are to take  
 all care to keep the mind in Reason  
 on of the gods of this mad World; in  
 Reconciliation with the Rule of Right  
 ...in aggressions of Temper  
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 ...in the World by bad Example  
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 ...our selves in it, by  
 ...to Truth and Right  
 ...can be done in all  
 ...may be said to be alive  
 ...in the World, when we are  
 dead and gone.

Dis



(83)

Vol. I. Triumph in the Divine Goodness.  
Praise is comely for the good and the  
right Man. The remarkable Providence  
and happy Dispositions of God  
and his will for his benighted  
not only given us leave to rebuild our  
Temple, but also given us leave  
he hath been with us and given us  
COURAGEMENT to the Lord and his  
We have that we have had out of  
ed out of Captivity, and had brought  
their Wives, they had meetings of joy  
and Triumph as you had a number  
other places.

## DISCOURSE IV.

The Joy which the Righteous have in  
God.

Preached in the  
New Chappel, December 7. 1668.

PSAL. xxxiii. I.

Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye Righte-  
ous, for Praise is comely for the  
Upright.

And can we meet in this New Stru-  
ture and Fabrick, raised out of its  
former Ruines, and not perform the  
Duty of the Text? If I be not mistaken,  
this is the first that is again employed  
in Sacred use, since the dismal and fatal  
fire. Let those that are here present  
give a good Example to all that shall  
follow after, and let us now, as  
the Text calls upon us, Rejoyce and  
Triumph

Dis. IV.

G 2

Vol. I. Triumph in the Divine Goodness; For Praise is comely for the good and upright Man. The remarkable Providences, and happier Dispensations of God, call upon us to be glad in the Lord, and thankful for his Benefits. God hath not only given us leave to rebuild our Ruins, and repair our wast Places; but he hath been with us, and given us Encouragement to this good Undertaking. We read that the *Jews* when they returned out of Captivity, and had but rebuilt their Walls, they had Meetings of Joy and Triumph; as you find it among other places, *Ezra*. 3. 11. and 6. 16. and *Nehem*. 12. 27. And this is not only Pious, but a transcendent Act of Faith, and confidence in God; upon such occasions to Bless him, to Rejoyce in him, and to Praise him. And they are of the basest, and most sordid Temper, that are not affected with the Expressions of the Divine Goodness and Kindness. And truly if we do not do the former duty of the Text, we shall fail in the latter. If we be not glad and rejoyce in the Lord, we shall never be thankful nor bless his Holy Name. For pray what Thankfulness when the Heart is possessed with Melancholy, and the Spirit full of heaviness.

Heaviness? But besides this, it is the general direction of Wisdom, to acknowledge God in all our Ways; therefore in things remarkable, so much the more; and 'tis the effect of Religion to do it; for what is Religion but a Participation, Imitation, and Resemblance of the Divine Goodness, both in the Temper of the Subject, and in its Expressions of Gratitude, Ingenuity, Acknowledgment, and the like. I know no other result of Religion but this. And surely were Religion estimated by this, we should endeavour after it, and be all good Friends, and he accounted the best Man, that is most free and ingenious in the sense of Divine Goodness. At least let us not neglect to make Acknowledgments to God, upon those eminent Advantages, that the course of his Providence doth afford; such as are eminent Successes in our Undertakings, and happy Recoveries out of any Trouble and Calamity; and giving us to see Light after Darkness. Such Opportunities as these, Pious Souls have been wont to close withal. And it is noted of one, a very good Person, a King of great Fame, as a thing that was very unnatural and unbecoming him, and very ill resented by



Vol. I. God, that he did not render unto the Lord according to the great benefit that was bestowed upon him. Thus it is reported of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32. 21. But his Heart was lifted up. Now Pride is opposite to the Acknowledgment of God and giving thanks to him. He that hath his Heart lifted up, will arrogate and assume to himself, and this seems to have been his Fault; for which Wrath was upon him, and the Israel of God. Now let such Failings as these were, though in former Ages, be for our Admonition, as the Apostle tells us, that things before us were for our Example upon whom the ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. 10. 11. If God had not taken pleasure in us, and in this great Undertaking, to Restore and Rebuild this ancient City, he might have obstructed and prohibited the same; as Joshua did Curse any one that undertook Rebuilding of Jericho. You shall find the Curse, Joshua 6. 26. and in practise, 1 Kings 16. 34. Therefore we have cause, both to be sensible of the Divine Goodness, in that his good Hand of Providence hath been over us, and given success to our Endeavours; and scattered our Fears, and sad Apprehensions, and given us to see so much of Restoration

Restoration as at this day, and as this place gives Testimony of. *Dis. IV.*

In the Text we have two things.

1. The Duty: And

2. The Reason of it.

1. The Duty is expressed in two Words, *Rejoice in the Lord, and Praise him*: And the Reason in these Words, *For it is comely so to do.*

*Rejoice in the Lord.* Then certainly Religion is not such a thing as 'tis represented to the World by many Men. For it is look'd upon as a doleful, troublesome melancholy thing; hurtful to the Body, and disquieting to the Souls of Men. But see whether this be true. Look upon Religion in its Actions and Employment: And what are they? *Rejoice and give Thanks.* Are not these Actions that are Grateful and Delightful? What doth transcend Divine Joy, and ingenious Acknowledgments? But then,

2. The Reason. *It is comely.* Whatsoever is the true Product of Religion,

Vol. I. is Graceful, Beautiful, and Lovely. There is nothing in Religion that is Dishonourable, Selfish; that is particular, and narrow-spirited. No, it is a Principle of the greatest Nobleness, and Generousness in the World. They are worldly Spirits, that are low, narrow, and contracted: The truly Religious are most Noble and Generous; and are the freest from Narrowness, Discontent, and Selfishness. There is the most solid Peace, and most grounded Satisfaction found in it. Job 10. 5. *The Triumph of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a moment.* But for the good Man and the Righteous, Psal. 4. 7. *Thou hast put more gladness into my Heart, then when their Corn, and Wine, and Oyl increased.* And Isa. 41. 16. *I will glory in the Holy One of Israel.* And Isa. 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, and my Soul shall be joyful in my God.* Nay in the greatest Streights and Exigency. Hab. 3. 17. *Though the Fig-tree should not Blossome, though there should be no Fruit in the Vine, and the Labour of the Olive should fail, &c. Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.*

Rejoyce



*Rejoyce in the Lord.*

Dis. IV.

1. For *Himself*; because of his own Goodness.

2. In *other things*, with respect to him. But

1. For *Himself*. 1<sup>st</sup>. God is the most Excellent Object in the World. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. what he is in himself, he is to the *Righteous*, who have Interest in him, and who are in Reconciliation with him. 'Tis Vanity and Emptiness to Glory in Men, and ordinary things, and where there is no Property; though things are Excellent, yet there is no Glory in that Case. Men are prone to Envy; therefore it is requisite to Glorifying, that Men have Property, that Men think upon God as their *own*; for where Men have no Property they are apt to say, *What am I the better?* The devilish Nature delights in God the less, because of his Goodness; for the more good God is, the further is he removed from their degenerate Temper. 'Tis our unsutibleness and unlikeness to God, that hinders our delight and satisfaction in him. 'Tis a great saying, *Whosoever is pleased with God, pleaseth God.* Whosoever, I say, is pleased with that which God is pleased with, is pleasing unto God.

Vol. I. God. But they that are in an unsuitable Temper and Disposition; (as the unregenerate Man, and sensual Spirit, as the Atheistical and Prophane, and those that are Malicious and Devilish.) they are in a Spirit opposite to the Spirit of God, and therefore they are offended with God, as well as God is offended with them. But *whosoever are pleased with God, God is pleased with them.* But to the Wicked and Unregenerate, God himself (as good as he is) he is a burden. For it is the temper of Wickedness to say unto God, *Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of thy ways,* Job 21. 14. For it is universal true, that things are to Persons, according as they are in State, Spirit, and Temper. Let Men pretend Love to the things of God never so much, they will not relish them, unless they be born of God. 'Tis they that are Naturalized to Heaven, that relish and savour Divine Things. That which is born of the World, is Enmity against God. But,

2. Our rejoycing must be with some respect to God; and though it be in *other things*, yet it must be in the Lord. And this is done when,

I. We

1. We acknowledg God Originally, as the *Fountain* from whence all good things come; and the first cause of all good. When we are sensible that we receive from him, and hold of him, and have what we enjoy from his Bounty.

2. When we account God better than all other Enjoyments whatsoever, and have all things in subordination to him.

3. When we look upon all our Enjoyments as Fruits of the Divine Goodness; and consider them as Enjoyments,

First, To *endear* God to us, and

Secondly, Of *Obliging* us to God. For you know a Courtesie is accounted as lost, if the Party doth not gain the good Will and Affection of the Person, to whom he shewed kindness. Even so it is in respect of God; if God be not endear'd to us, by his kindness, and we obliged to him for his Goodness, all is lost. But,



VOL. I.

4. We then may be said to *Rejoyce in the Lord*, when we make God the *final end*, and make all things subservient to his Glory; and account our selves bound to dispose of what he gives us, according to his appointment, and for the ends of Vertue. And to this purpose, That we may rejoyce in the good things, that through Providence we do enjoy, with some respect to God; two things are necessary.

1. It is necessary to give God *place in the World*.

2. That we *take pleasure* in the Works of his Providence. For there is nothing that God doth, or that he doth permit to be done; but it doth offer to the Intelligent Mind, some *Notion from God*, and cause some observance of God in the World; and doth give advantage to some Divine Contemplation, and so doth put the Soul upon some Action of Acknowledgment and Adoration of God.

To enforce this *Joy in God*; I subjoyn two things.

1. That

vi. That Joy is *necessary* to the Life of Man. The Apostle hath told us, that *worldly sorrow causeth Death*. Sorrow and Sadness, Melancholy and Discontent spoils the Temper of a Man's Mind; it vitiates the humours of the Body; it prevents the Divine, and hinders the Physitian. For the Divine deals by Reason; but this being obliterated, he can do nothing. For he applys himself to the Mind and Understanding; but Sorrow and Melancholy hinders the receiving of true Reason, and then his Work is at an end. And it also hinders the Physitian; for if the Mind be Discomposed by Melancholy, it doth not afford due Benevolence to the Body. You have an Instance in *Nebucadnezzar* who was by Melancholy transformed into a Beast. Not that he was so by external Form; but he did so esteem himself; and things are as Men conceive them. The Sour and Melancholy, they are unthankful to God, and cruel to themselves, and peevish in their Converse: So that Joy and Rejoycing is *necessary* in respect to our selves. But

Job 1. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. In

2. In respect to God; Joy and Rejoycing is safe for us, and preservative to us, as I shall shew you in sundry Respects.

1. If we have respect to God in our Joy, we can never *Transgress*.

2. We cannot exceed nor any ways misbehave our selves: We cannot do our selves any harm. For we read of some that have suddenly died, by reason of Joy, at the tidings of Good, as well as sudden bad News.

3. Our Joy will then be *sincere* and *pure*, not frothy and fantastical.

4. It will offend none, nor be irksome to any.

5. It will always keep company with *Gratitude* and *Humility*. For observe it in the Text, they are made reciprocal, to rejoyce in the Lord, and to give thanks unto him.

6. It will always leave us in a good temper; which worldly Joy will not do.

7. It



7. It is wholly seperate from all *Surfeiting*, Drunkenness, and Uncleaness; and will free the Soul from the *Spiritual Sins* of Haughtiness, Insolency, and Self-assuming. If our Triumph be in the Lord, it seperates from sensual things, and from the *Spiritual Sins* of Pride and Arrogancy. Therefore let there be always something that is *Spiritual* in the ground, reason, or occasion, or motive of your Joy. Some notion of God's Providence in all your Mirth. Sadness and Joy are things of the most powerful Influence in the Life of Man; the former breaks his Heart, and the latter many times greatly Transports him. But now an Eye to God in both, doth poise and balance them, and makes the Soul safe and steady under them. And so much for the former part of the Text, *Rejoyce in the Lord.*

II. [*For Praise is comely for the Upright.*] 157. These Words you see are Exegetical to *Rejoycing*. *Rejoyce in the Lord*, for [*Praise is comely.*] If Praise and Rejoycing were not the same, there were no Argument in the Words, *For Praise is comely.* And then, 2dly, *Uprightness* is Exegetical to *Righteousness*. *Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye Righteous,*  
for

Vol. I. *for Praise is comely for the Upright.* By Uprightness is here meant our Sincerity and Integrity, our honest Meaning and true Intention; which through God's gracious acceptance is our Righteousness. *We are, none of us, at all better then we mean:* Our gracious God takes us by what we understand, intend, and mean. And the truth is here, there is no Dispensation for failure in Intention. For Misapprehension God doth grant allowance, and dispence with Humane Frailties; but for a failing of Intention there is no Dispensation. Fail here and you are *Hypocrites*, and false-hearted; and therefore Uprightness is our Perfection, and our Righteousness. For either you intend well, or you do not; if you do, you are Upright, if you do not, you are Hypocrites. It goes mighty far in Religion, that a Man doth simply, honestly, and in plainness of Heart, mean and intend God and Goodness, Righteousness and Truth. He is Upright that means well: though he be in many Particulars mistaken and incumbred with Weaknesses, yet he is Righteous in the sight of God, through God's gracious acceptance. Therefore it becomes us to be highly Charitable one towards another

other; since God is so Gracious, and Dis. IV.  
 and sets such a value upon our good  
 Meanings, and sincere Intentions, as to  
 account of this for Righteousness, ei-  
 ther in Practice or Opinion. If a Man  
 in the Integrity of his Heart doth ho-  
 nestly mean God, Goodness, Righte-  
 ousness, and Truth; God will receive  
 him. *Every Man's Mind is himself; and  
 a Man is what he means and intends;  
 and what a Man means not, that he is  
 not, that he does not.* And this I have  
 said, because in the Text there are two  
 Words made Exegetical, *Praise and Rejoy-  
 cing; Righteousness and Uprightness. Rejoyce  
 in the Lord. O ye Righteous, for Praise is  
 comely for the Upright.*

This remains to be spoken to: And  
 'tis a gallant Notion in this Age that  
 tends so much to Atheism.

*Praise is comely.* This is spoken by  
 way of Argument, and 'tis no Argu-  
 ment if this be not true, that *there is a  
 Reason for what we do from the things  
 themselves.* I mean this, and if you  
 grant but *this*, that there is that which  
 of it self is Good and Comely, Just and

H

Right,



Dis. IV. Right, and there is that which of it self  
 is Sinful and Abominable; we exclude  
 Atheism out of the World. And this  
 must be acknowledged, otherwise there  
 is no Argument in these Words, *For  
 Praise is comely*. If all things are alike, and  
 no difference of things, one thing is no  
 more comely then another. Now be-  
 cause this is an excellent Rule, and a  
 way to exclude Atheism out of the  
 World, I will shew you that this Noti-  
 on is abundant in Scripture, viz. *That  
 Goodness and Truth are first in things;*  
 and though they are so in Men's Ap-  
 prehensions *secondarily*, yet they are so  
*first in themselves*; and that Men live in  
 a lye, and are in a lye, if their Appre-  
 hensions be not conformed to things in  
 their reality and existence. Several Scrip-  
 tures have this Notice: *Phil. 4. 8.* runs  
 upon it all along. *Whatsoever things are  
 Venerable, Just, Honest, Praise worthy, &c.*  
 How insignificant were these sayings, if  
 all things were alike as Men would have  
 them? So *Rom. 13. 13. walk decently,  
 or honestly.* *1 Cor. 7. 35. 1 Cor. 14. 40.*  
*Let all things be done decently.* *1 Cor.*  
*11. 13. Is it comely, is it decent?* *Eccles.*  
*5. 18. Psal. 92. 1. It is good to sing Praise*  
 to

to the Lord. Psal. 147. 1. Praise is comely, &c. Dis. IV.

The Reason of things is, that Law and Truth which none must Transgress: I say, the reason of things is a Law and Truth which none, either by Power or Priviledge, may Transgress. And for this I will give you such Arguments for Conviction, that greater cannot be given: For I tell you, 'Tis a Law to Heaven, and that which God takes notice of in all his Dispensations to his Creatures. It is that which God will give an account of himself by, to the Understandings of his Creatures. For this I will produce many Scriptures; Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne, Psal. 97. 2. Can any Man understand this to be nothing but what is Arbitrary? Job 8. 3. and 34. 12. Will be by Power pervert that which is Right? Rom. 3. 3. Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid. How insignificant are all these Expreffions if all things be alike and Arbitrary, if the difference of things be nothing else but Fantastical and Conceited? And yet this and much more must the Atheist say, or else his Opinion is

Vol. I. worth nothing. For if there be a difference in things, he will be Self-condemned. We have *Abraham's Question*, *Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* These were certainly presumptuous, arrogant, and bold Speeches to be said to God, if my Notion were not true; for these conclude Will, and shut it up, as having no Rule in this Law of Right. So *Acts 17. 31. It is said God shall judge the World in Righteousness.* If there be not difference in things, and a Rule of Right; these Words signifie nothing. I could quote you hundreds of places for this, *All the ways of God are ways of Truth, of Righteousness, and of Judgment.* Can any Man imagine, that this signifies no more, but that things are as *Will* would have them. Therefore I tell you, (and it is that by which you and all the World shall be judged) That these are not bare Words and Titles, not Shadows and Imaginations, There is that which is decent and fitting to be done; or that which is equal; that which is fair; that which is comely and seemly: *There is that which holds of it self, and is decent, comely*



comely and fitting. *Truth and Goodness are first in things, then in Persons;* and 'tis our Duty to observe them, and our Uprightness to comply with them. All things are not Arbitrary and Positive Constitution; but there is that which is Lovely and Comely in it self; and there is that which is Impure and Ugly in its own Nature and Quality; and if any Man medles with it, let him be sure it will Disparage him, and render him Contemptible, Vile, and Base. There is also that which is Generous, Noble and Worthy, and will gain Repute and Credit to him that uses it. 'Tis not all one for an Intelligent and Voluntary Agent, to do one thing or another; for there are Rules of Right wherewith all Intelligent Agents must comply, and they do Righteously when they do, and sinfully when they do not. There is such a Turpitude in some things, that there is no Priviledge or Protection; nothing that can be alledg'd that will gain a Man liberty to do it; for it hath an intrinſick Malignity and Impurity; and these things are a Disparagement to any Person whatsoever. And there are things that are Just and

H 3      Righteous,

Vol. I. Righteous, Worthy and Generous, that will Recompence the Person that is exercised in them.

And then God made Man with a Judgment of Discerning; and 'tis expected that Man should Judge, and Discern, and Reason concerning things. And this is not so much our Priviledge, as our Charge and Trust, to observe the difference of things. The whole Motion of the World below Men, is nulled upon a Moral Consideration; and no Morality to be found in any Agent below Man. The motions of all else are no better then Mechanick. Now this is the Foundation of Scripture, Exhortation and Admonition: We are to examine by Reason, and by Argument; because God applys to Reason and and Judgment, and to Understanding, which is inseparable to Choice and Resolution.

In short a Man is accomplished by two things, 1<sup>st</sup>. By being enlightned in his Intellectual Faculties. 2<sup>dly</sup>. By being directed in his Morals to refuse Evil, and to do Good; and to chuse and determine

mine things according to the difference of them. The 1<sup>st</sup> is the Perfection of a Man's Understanding. The 2<sup>d</sup> is the Goodness of his Mind. Phil. 2. 13. *Work out your Salvation with fear; for it is God that worketh in you, &c.* This supposes a Judgment of Discerning; and then consequently, that God does expect, that a Man, according to his Apprehension and Judgment, should chuse, resolve, and determine. Now where we are called upon to work in the affair of Salvation: See how cautiously the Scripture speaks of it; Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your own Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good Pleasure.* From hence no body should be discouraged, from the sence of his own Disability; nor Arrogate to himself, or be Presumptuous; for *God worketh in him to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* If this Notion were but well observed, a great part of some Controversies, at this day, would be Resolved; for Scripture doth Attribute to us that which God does, and bids us do that which God doth with us: That which we do is attributed to God; and that which God doth



Vol. I. by us, is both ascribed to God, and to us; we work, and God works; we are awakened, directed, and assisted by him. So that I think there is too much heat in many Controversies, and a right stating them would extinguish them, from being in the World.

We see there is a direct and exact Government in Heavenly Bodies. When did ever the Sun fail? It were Prodigious if it should. And why should not *we* that are guided by Principles of Reason and Illumination, (which is a far greater Communication from God) why should we be so Irregular and Inconsistent, since the Lower Creation is so Regular and Uniform? For there is nothing of Conflagration in the Heavenly Motions, because no Oppositions. And if *we* were uniform to Principles of Reason and right Understanding, all Motions with us would be so, and tend to mutual Information and Edification; but not at all to Provocation, or Exasperation one of another.

Pray, let me leave this Notion with you, That *there is a difference in things; there*

there is that which is Comely, that Dis. IV.  
which is Regular, Decent, and directed   
according to Rule, and the standing  
Principle of God's Creation. You see  
how much time I have spent in the  
Notion; or that which is the force of  
the Argument; *We are to Rejoyce and  
give Thanks, because it is comely.* The  
Reason lies in the Quality of the thing,  
which doth suppose, that *there is a dif-  
ference in things*; by which the Atheist  
is excluded out of the World: And  
Mens Liberties restrained to that which  
is Right. 'Tis no Rule to a Man's Acti-  
ons to do that which he may maintain  
by Power and Priviledge; but to do  
that which is *fit* to be done, *Just* and  
*Right*; to comply in all things, with  
the *Reason of things*, and the *Rule of  
Right*, and in all things to be according  
to the Nature, Mind, and Will of God;  
The Law of Justice, the Rule of Right,  
the Reason of Things. These are the  
Laws, by which we are to Act and  
Govern our Lives; and we are all born  
under the Power of them: and if this  
be not true, this Argument of the Psal-  
mist is Insignificant, *Praise the Lord, for  
it is comely.* The reason of things there-  
fore

Vol. I. fore is our Rule both in Religion and  
 ~~~~~ Converse one with another; and tho' these are different Forms of Speech, yet they are always in Conjunction. The Reason of the Mind is by these to be directed; and indeed all Principles of Religion are founded upon the surest, most constant and highest Reason in the World. *There is nothing so intrinsically Rational as Religion is*; nothing so self-evident, nothing that can so justify it self, or that hath such pure Reason to commend it self as Religion hath. For it gives an account of it self to our Judgments and to our Faculties; and this God doth himself acknowledge, Isa. 5. 3. *Judge I pray you between me and my Vineyard.* So I Cor. 11. 13. *Judge in your selves, is it comely, &c.* He brings that for an Argument, the Indecency of it. But so much for the Notion, *That there is a difference in things; that Good and Evil are first in things; right and wrong first in things themselves.* This is not Arbitrary, nor Imagined, nor Determined by Power and Priviledge; but there is Good and Evil, Comely and Uncomely in things themselves. A Word of this Particular Case, and I have done.

Praise

Praise is comely. It is Natures Sense, 'tis the import of any Man's Reason: Every Man's Mind tells him that *this is decent*; and no Man can have Peace, Quiet, and Satisfaction in the contrary; unless he be sunk down into Baseness, and degenerated into a sordid Temper, he will acknowledge the kindness of his Benefactor. Now because God doth infinitely Transcend all the Benefactors in the World, if any Man doth not acknowledge his Goodness, and Praise him for his Benefits; he is sunk down into Baseness, and fallen beneath his Creation and Nature.

God Loves us, and therefore he doth us Good: We Love God because we are Partakers of his Benefits. Now Praise and Thanksgiving is all the Return that our Necessity and Beggery is capable of: And it is very comely for us, that are so much beholden to the Divine Goodness, to make our due Acknowledgments; and therefore it is observed that in Ingratitude there is a Connexion of all Vice. All Disingenuity and Baseness are concentrated in the
Bowels

Vol. I. Bowels of Ingratitude. He that will not be engaged by Kindness, no *Cords of Man will hold him*. It is observed both by God and Man, as Degeneracy in its ultimate issue, the greatest Depravation that Nature is capable of, to be insensible of Courtesies, and not to make due Acknowledgments. How often doth *David* complain of those Persons, that were obliged to him by kindness, that they turned his Enemies, *Psal. 41, and 45. He that sat at Meat with me hath lift up his Heel against me*. How is he represented by him, as a most sordid wretched Person, one that was degenerated to the fullest degree? And then God himself complains, *Deut. 32. 15. Jesuran waxed fat and kicked, he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation*. God and Man complains of the Ungrateful, because all Favours and Courtesies are lost. Yea 'tis well observed, that it is the only way to make a desperate Enemy, to bestow kindness upon an unthankful Person. And this is too well known, that those that have been made Friends by Courtesie, proving false, have been the greatest Betrayers. Therefore of all

all Persons and Tempers, the Insensible Dis. IV.
and Ungrateful are the worst. Yea truly these are the very Pests of the World, the Enemies of Humane Nature; they harden Mens Hearts, who otherways were free to do Courtesies, because they do not know but that they may make an Enemy. I will make this out (*viz.* The baseness of Ingratitude) in these two Words.

1. Because *nothing is more due to God then our Gratitude*; for he loadeth us with his Benefits, and is pleased to please us, and doth many things to gratifie us.

2. By this we give *Testimony of our Minds to God*. For we have nothing at all to Sacrifice to God, but the consent of our Minds; an Ingenuous Acknowledgment. We have nothing to bring him, but the consent of our Minds; and this the grateful Person doth, and by this he signifies, that if it were within his compass, he would requite the Divine Goodness; for 'tis not so much the Gift, as the Mind of the Giver. He that is unthankful is most full of himself;

Vol. I. self; and apt to think that all the World
 was made for him; and that all Men
 are bound to be his Servants, and to
 attend his purpose, and that he may
 serve himself of all Mens Parts, Powers,
 Priviledges and Opportunities; but he
 himself is exempt from all Men. So
 that he is an Enemy to God and Men.

DIS

DISCOURSE V.

The Secret Blasting of Men.

Pf. 39. 11.

*When thou with rebukes dost correct
man for iniquity, thou makest his
beauty to consume away like a
moth, surely every man is vanity.
Selah.*

Nothing is less true, nothing more
unbecoming us, limited, finite,
and fallible Creatures; than the thought
of Independency and Self-sufficiency.
And indeed, the whole Creation of
God in comparison with God himself, is
less than the dust of the Balance: and
if you come to compare, will hold no
weight. Nothing becomes us more,
than to know what we are: nothing
befits us better, than that we know our

Disc. V.

Vol. I. own state, and to be sensible of our
 ~~~~~ own Dependence, and Necessity, and  
 to make due Acknowledgment to God.  
 If a man seriously weigh these words,  
 he will always veil to God, Humble  
 himself, submit and deprecate. So ma-  
 ny things there are Emphatical in these  
 words, *When thou, &c.*

Sin, on Man's part, is that that makes  
 him much more liable and obnoxious to  
 God, than he is in respect of his Crea-  
 ture-State: *When thou with rebukes dost  
 correct man for iniquity thou makest his  
 beauty;* (that that he values himself by;  
 that that is his only thing, his top ex-  
 cellency ) *to consume away like a moth,*  
 without any Resistance, without any  
 stop, insensibly: So that he that doth  
 contemplate what is said in the former  
 part of the words, will presently Ac-  
 knowledge, that *every Man, even in his  
 best estate, is Vanity, altogether Vanity.*

These words give an account of two  
 things, which are the matter of the  
 greatest Wonder.

1. How it comes to pass there are so  
*many and so great Evils* in the World.

2. How so many Persons come to  
 Wither and fall away and come to  
 nothing in the world. And these two  
 are



are the greatest matters of *wonder* and Disc.V.  
admiration among men. 

1. How it comes to pass that there are *so many and so great Evils* in the world: and the wonder is this, That God governs the world, and God is known by his Goodness: what, these evils from the hand of a good God! how can this be? The greatest questions that have ever been in the world, have been these two,

1. Whence *Evils* come? And

2. How it comes to pass they were not *subdued*, as soon as they did appear? I believe it would puzzle the head of any one in the world to answer them; if he do not learn an answer from Scripture. Now this place resolves you: you have here the cause of Evil, and you have here God challenging, controuling, and rebuking it. For if you find out the procuring *Cause*, you find out all: not he that doth the thing, but he that was the cause of the thing being done, doth the mischief.

2. Then how comes it to pass that *so many Wither* in the world, with all advantages; Honour, Titles, Dignity and Estate, that they never spent their thoughts about getting; and out-live

Vol. I. it all. Whereas you have others born Naked into the world; and through the Improvement of Nature's powers, they rise to Estates and Revenues. How comes this to pass? In these words you have an account. *When thou with rebukes dost correct a man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*

These two considerations are enough to engage your Attention: Every body hath their Ears open to hear Resolutions of wonders.

In the words you have *four things*.

1. What is *intimated*, and that is, that sin is the Procuring cause of Punishment. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for sin, &c.* Sin is the procuring cause of Punishment. It is sin that doth the world all the mischief that is in the world. A fault deserves Punishment: the Fault going before, doth naturally draw on with it punishment.

Culpa est  
merit. in  
pena.  
Culpa na-  
turaliter  
trahit post  
se penam.

2. Take notice of what is supposed, That God doth regularly and usually chastise sinners. God doth, as a thing becoming Him in the Government of the world, he doth controul sinners, and chastise men for sin. The word is very remarkable. *When thou with Rebukes, &c.* which intimates something in

secret:

## Blasting of Men

P17

*secret* : not only openly Punished in the Disc. V. View of the world ; but sinners feel checks and reproofs from God , which, unless they themselves tell, Others are not aware of. An *internal* stroke ; for these rebukes are *secret* ; though they are certainly felt by those that are under them, by-standers take no cognizance of them. *The Torments of a man's own Breast* are beyond any Evil that befalls the Body : Trouble in a man's Mind, is beyond the pain of the Stone or Gout. For if a mans Mind be whole, he can bear up against bodily infirmity : *But a wounded spirit who can bear ?* Prov. 18. 14.

Tormenta  
pectoris.  
Vulnera  
Conscien-  
tia.  
Si Dii  
Deaq; om-  
nes, &c.  
Tacitus &  
Tiberius.

3. Take notice what is *proposed* ; That these Rebukes of God *blast* men : when thou with Rebukes correctest man for sin *thou makest his beauty to consume* [*His beauty*] that is, that which is most desirable, that which is most valuable ; his health, his wealth, his friends, his internal peace, the parts of his mind : for these are a mans excellency, and all these are meant by his *Beauty*. And if God blast a man, all these wither away, and come to nothing : thou makest his *Beauty to consume away like a moth* : a moth is always



Vol. I. fretting, not apt to be found out, not  
 apt to be resisted, but brings all to confusion. These Rebukes of God blast men.

4. Take notice what is here *Inferred*: *Surely every man is vanity*. And no conclusion doth more plainly follow from any thing premised. For every man is *Vanity* upon a double account.

1st, Because he is *fallible*, and so subject to miscarry; else he would never be found in the ways of iniquity, and

2dly, Because he is so controulable and *accountable*; and under a power that he cannot resist.

Thus I have given you an account in these four particulars, of the matter that lyes in the words. And really, the Text offers to you things of *great moment*, and weighty consideration. I will speak shortly to all *four*: and because I will be brief, I will put the two first together, and they will do well so, *viz.*

1st, That iniquity is the Foundation of Punishment: And 2dly, that it is regular, usual and ordinary for God to controul and punish sinners. He is expected, and it becomes him, as he is the Governour, and Maintainer of Righteousness, and Truth. And if you speak properly

properly of Punishment, God doth only *Disc. V.*  
 chastise *Sinners* ; So, and no otherwise ;  
*Sinners*, and none else. And then it is  
 a great Note, and will teach us to speak  
 more accurately, when we speak of *Pu-*  
*nishment* : For if we speak properly, God  
 doth not Punish but in case of Sin. *Pena ubi*  
 But because use and practice hath Am- *est ratio*  
 plified this word ; and in a more large *Vindictæ,*  
 sense of the word, we say a Man is Pu- *Malum*  
 nished, when any evil thing befalls him, *sensus.*  
 though he hath done nothing that may  
 procure it ; I will therefore in a prepa-  
 ratory way offer *four cases*, which we are  
 not to call punishment.

1. The effects of Gods *absolute sove-*  
*raignty*, and Power. We acknowledge,  
 that God in the use of his Sovereignty,  
 may deal differently with several of his  
 Creatures : and yet, where he deals bet-  
 ter, he doth not reward, and where he  
 deals worse, he doth not Punish. And  
 if this were well understood, those pas-  
 sages in *Rom. 9.* would be better under-  
 stood : Such as these, *Jacob have I loved,*  
*and Esau have I hated* : It imports no more,  
 than that it was the Pleasure of God,  
 to take the younger Brother *Jacob*, and  
 make him the Progenitor of the pro-  
 mised *Messias*, and not *Esau* : and this

Vol. I. is the meaning of that Scripture: *Hating* there, is *less loving*; and our Saviour so useth the word, *Luke 14. 26.* when he bids us *bate our own life, and hate Father and Mother*; whereas we are enjoined to honour Father and Mother; and to preserve our Lives; and it is our duty; for, if we may not kill another, we may not kill our selves. And this is expounded, in *Matt. 10. 37, 38.* by defending our life, that is, with denying Christ, &c. So again, *hath not the Potter power over his clay, &c.* that is, he may make one, a Vessel of higher Use; another, of inferiour use: and this belongs to Gods undoubted Priviledge, Power and Sovereignty; To raise one to a higher condition in the World, and place another in an inferiour condition; to make one High, another Low; one Rich, another Poor; one a Master, another a Servant. Now we are not to say that God doth Punish him, that is in the worst condition: here is no notion of Punishment: this is neither the Reward of any man's Virtue; nor the Punishment of any mans fault: for Punishment, properly is, where there is *Pœna ratione vindictæ*: But these things are as God pleaseth. Now this I make further



ther appear by interpreting St Paul by Disc. V. himself, where he speaks of *Vessels of honour, and vessels of dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2.

20. his own words are, *In a great house there are not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver, but also some of Wood and of Earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour.* The vessel to honour, as the Cup he drinks in; the Vessel to dishonour, as other Utenfils. Now who hath any ill design upon his necessary Utenfils? So that all these differences are within the latitude of Gods Sovereignty, and speak nothing either of Love or Hatred.

2. That that is Natural Evil sometimes comes from God, barely for *Trial*, and for *Exercise*: and God doth not intend Punishment at all; neither doth he look at any Provocation, nor hath Displeasure at the person: and this was plainly good *Job's* Case. For in the beginning of the first Chapter *Job* hath Gods recommendation to the full, and yet the Devil hath *Job* in his power; and is only restrained as to his Life. Therefore *Job* was not *Punished*, but he was put upon the Use and Exercise and Trial of his Patience, and several other Vertues and Graces. And therefore *Job* did

Vol. I. did well to dispute against his Friends :  
 ~~~~~ For they run upon this Notion, that if any man suffered Evil, it must be Punishment : And that *Job*, notwithstanding his outward appearance, was either a Hypocrite, or some way obnoxious. But he stands to it, and will maintain his Uprightness. And in the 42 Chap. there God Justifies him, Challenges his Friends, and sends them to *Job*, and he must Sacrifice for them. So that, notwithstanding *Job* suffered so much evil, he was not an Offender, not Punished, but Exercised. And God may Tempt us, in this kind ; to try our Affections to him , and whether we will stand to him, or no.

3. There are Chastisements, or harder conditions for the *encrease* of Virtue ; the Contempt of the World, the Encrease of Modesty and Humility. We might over-value the World, and value our selves too much, if we were not sometimes taught, that these things are not to be taken into the account of our Happiness.

4. There is sometimes also Evils, for an *Evil Neighbours sake* : a very good man, at whom God takes no offence, he may suffer some evil for his Neighbours sake,

Aliquod
 malum
 propter
 Vicinum
 malum.

fake. As good *Josiah* was overborn by the evil that was done in the days of *Mannasseh*. And in this sense is to be understood that in *Ezech. 21. 3.* *I will cut off from thee, the righteous with the wicked.* And here is no Punishment neither; for they that are not in the Fault, may suffer because of the unhappiness that comes upon their Neighbours. And God knows how to make up this their loss in Time, and in Eternity. In neither of these cases, is God said to Punish. Neither of these cases come within the case of the Text. But now, these cases being taken out, I come to give you an account of the Truth of the Proposition, *That sin is the cause of punishment,* and that in five particulars.

I. Many sins are the *Natural causes* of the Evils that are consequent upon them: As Intemperance of certain diseases, distempers, and dying before mens time. Some men drink themselves into Fevers, and some into Dropsies. Here, sin is the *natural cause* of evil. Men of Intemperate and dissolute lives destroy their bodily Health; dull and stupifie their Reason and Understanding; and waste their Estates. It is most apparent that some Men have overthrown strong
and

Vol. I. and healthy constitutions ; and stupified quick and nimble Parts, by disorderly Living. They might have been much more, in both ; had they been Sober ; had they not spoiled themselves by Misgovernment. It is apparent that some Men that never knew the Getting of a penny, as they had not Wit to get an Estate, so they have not had the Prudence to enjoy, so as to Keep an Estate : But have wasted it faster than others got it. Now in these cases, no body can say that God was severe ; but these Men were mad, and played the Fool. Let not us therefore ascribe that to God, that is properly consequent upon Mens own excess, temerity and rashness.

Eccles. 7.
17.

Acts 12.
23.

Exod. 32.
35.

2. Some iniquities are the *Moral causes* of Evil. For this several instance. Herod taking Gods glory to himself, was the Moral cause of his dying of the Lousy Disease. Because he did arrogate and assume to himself *that* that was proper to God, God would not suffer him to go out of the world, with the common honour of Mankind. The *Israelites* Calf-Worship (the first instance of Idolatry we read of) or worshipping God by a *false Medium*, (which is Idolatry, whatsoever the Papists say) was the true
Moral

Blasfing of Men.

125

Moral cause of the slaughter of so many of them. *Senacherib* blasphemes God : and the Host are all found dead Corpses that night. The case of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram* ; God created a new thing in the world, the Earth opens her mouth, and swallows them up alive. *Nebuchadnezzar* vaunting himself of his Majesty and his Glory, presently is made less than a Man, sinks into Melancholy, and by his own conceit, was dispossest of his Kingdom, and eat grass with the Oxe, &c. if that be the explanation. *Ananias and Saphira*, lying to the Holy Ghost, are smitten dead one after another : whereas they did a brave act, sold their Estate, and brought a moiety : which if they had brought it as a moiety, had been well enough. But bringing half, as if that were All, they were slain (for lying to the Holy Ghost) by the word of St *Peter's* mouth. Here is sin the *Moral cause*, that is, the Matter of the Provocation, the procuring cause of Punishment.

3. Some evils are the proper Remedies of certain sins ; as Scarceness, and famine of fulness of bread, and Excels. Throwing some men out of place and power, the Remedy to cure Oppression and

Disc. V.

2 Kings

19. 35.

Numb. 16.

Dan. 4. 24.

Acts 5.

Vol. I. and Wrong-doing. The streightned condition of some men, that are lavish, Prodigal and expensive : The low estate of some that are Proud, and conceited : this keeps them within some Measure and Bounds. This is the 3d case ; some evils the proper *Remedies* of certain sins.

4. Punishments are requisite to Maintain Gods Honour in the world. God would be forgotten to be the Governour of the world ; He would not be thought to be concerned, if he should wholly neglect to Punish, *Ecc. 8. 11.* *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.* Therefore, are open sins controuled, and secret sins are punished, lest God should be denyed to be the searcher of hearts. God might be forgotten to be the Supreme Moderator and Governour of the world, if the world should not hear of him, when there be high exorbitancies.

5. The *Variety of things*, and *changeable conditions*, are as requisite to maintain Vertue and Holiness among Mankind ; as the Winds ; which occasion Storms and Tempests, which put the
Air

Air and Sea into motion ; and so keep them from Stench and Putrefaction. In Nature, we do observe that all things are continued, and preserved in their Purity, by *motion*. And where there is not motion, there is Putrefaction. Now since the *World Rational* is as subject to corrupt, as the *World Natural* is, therefore it is fitting the *World of Mankind* should be put upon motion and activity ; as it is requisite for the *World Natural* to be put upon motion, by the Winds fanning the Air, and putting the Sea into motion, and thereby preserving them. This I observe, a great many Scriptures impute creatures Degeneracy to their Living at ease, *Zech. 1. 15.* And I am sore dis- ^{Amos 6.}
pleased with the Heathen that are at ease, &c. ^{Jer. 48.}
So *Luk. 12. 19.* And I will say to my Soul, ^{11.}
Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy ease, Eat, Drink and be merry. Upon this account the Lesser Evils, such as are the Evils of Smart, are preventive of the Greater Evils ; such as are Rancor, Malignity, and Naughtiness of mind ; and this tends to preservation. And here is the account of Gods punishment ; not that he loves punishment ; but as becoming a Governour, and maintaining Right, and for the good of his Creatures.
And

Vol. I. And thus have I given you a just Account of what is in these words intimated and supposed, that sin is the Procuring cause of Punishment: and that God doth regularly and usually controul and Punish sinners. A word of *Inference*.

Jam. 41.

1. It is good service to Mankind to *Restrain* evils, and hinder them. This the Magistrate may do: this the Preacher of Righteousness: it is proper for him to do: *This*, the holy Liver, by his good example, doth constantly do. The great evils that do Infect and disturb the world, they have their being and Foundation in Sin: and therefore whosoever prevents iniquity and Sin, he doth the work of a Saviour in the world, and a preserver. The world would be another thing, were it not for the iniquity that prevails in it.

2. Then let us *not forsake our own mercy*, but favour our selves; not expose our selves to ruine, by causeless and unprofitable commission of sin. Here I would take up St Peter's counsel, and it's excellent good in this case. *Mat. 16. 22. Be it far from thee, &c.* do not your selves so great Harm, for that that will not profit: do not do your selves mischief, upon so easie an account. Every thing

thing of Sin is Irrational and Unprofitable : And a Man offers Violence to himself, when he doth it ; and doth himself wrong. Therefore, favour your selves, do not do your selves wrong, upon terms so unreasonable, and so unprofitable.

3. Since iniquity doth so much prevail in the World, let *God* be *excused* from our charge of his Usurpation over his creation. Not he that brings on the harm ; but he that is the Peccant party doth the mischief. As in War, not he that raiseth the first Army ; but he that gives the first Offence, is the cause of the War. Therefore let us not think that God doth Usurp, or Gratifie any thing in himself, when he doth Punish. No, the true and proper cause is the Delinquent party ; he that gives the first Offence.

4. When the judgments of God are upon us in pursuit of sin, let us then do as *Joshua* did, let us search out the provoking Cause ; to use *Daniel's* word, the *Abomination of Desolation* : that is, the abominable thing that doth provoke God to desolate. Let us remove that that is the cause, and doth contain the Disease.

thing of sin is irrational and therefore
table. And a man offers violence to
himself when he doth it; and doth
himself wrong. Therefore, to wrong
themselves do not do your selves wrong
upon terms to unreasonable, and to some
probable.
• Since inquiry doth to much prevail
in the World, let God be excused from
our charge of his dispensation over his
creation. Not he that brings on the
harm; but he that is the first party
doth the mischief. As in War, not he
that starts the first party, but he that
gives the first Offence is the cause of the
War. Therefore let us not think that
God doth ill, or of course any thing
in himself, when he doth punish. No,
the true and proper cause is the Deini-
pious party, he that gives the first
Offence.
• When the indignation of God is
expressed in punishment, let us then do
as Job did, let us search out our sin-
ning Cause, and the Devil's word, and
the punishment of God, that in the
abominable thing that doth provoke
God to deplete, let us remove that
that is the cause, and then remain
the blameless.

them to rebuke. When thou wilt Rebuke

dost correct Man for iniquity, thou makest

his beauty to consume away like a moth.

This is the main Point of the Words, and

that which I have intended to intimate

when these Words came first into my

Mind. When God takes a sinner in

hand, and sets himself to reverse what

the sinner hath ungodly done; he fails

and comes to nothing; he cannot bear

Ps. xxxix. 11.

When thou wilt rebukes dost correct

Man for iniquity, thou makest his

beauty to consume away like a

moth, surely every Man is vanity.

Selah.

Continuations that are made by Way of such

as are the Declarations that are made a

I Have already spoken to what in

these Words is intimated; That In

iquity is the procuring Cause of Punish

ment; and also to that that is here

supposed, That it is regular and ordina

ry, that God should give testimony against

Iniquity. That He should challenge sin

ners. Of these two I have given an

account. In the

3d. place I come to that that is pro

posed in these Words, that is, That thou

Rebukes of God do blast Men, and cause

Dis. VI.

Vol. I. *them to wither. When thou with Rebukes dost correct Man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* This is the main Point of the Words, and that which I mainly thought upon, when these Words came first into my Mind. When God takes a Sinner in hand, and sets Himself to reverse what the Sinner hath unduly done; he fails and comes to nothing; he cannot bear up against God. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* I might enlarge these Words, to take in all the Judgments of God upon a sinful World; which are as so many Testimonies of God against Iniquity: Such as are the Confusions that are made by War; such as are the Desolations that are made among Men by Famine, Plague, and Pestilence, and all other Judgments, wherein there is a common Suffering, which all Men acknowledge to be the Hand of God: and in respect to these, *God is known by the Judgments he doth execute.* But, not excluding these, I shall only take notice of the Words, as to what may pass immediately between God and the Sinner in Secret, and are not so visible to the Eyes of the By-standers: And that

that for these Considerations. Consider- Dif. VI.
ing the Hebrew Word used in the Text

for Rebukes, **וּבְ** and **וּבְ**, im-
port such Rebukes, Reproofs,
as carry with them a No-
tion, Reason, and Argument
of Conviction, and Self-
condemnation: They signifie
Corripere, Erudire; to Re-

*Interpretationes hic reales in-
tellige h. e. Parnas, quæ
sunt vice Increpationum,
& quasi Advocati, seu in-
terpretes (ut Hebræi lo-
quantur) inter Deum, &
Hominem. V. Synop. Crit.
מְבַרְרִים*

prove, and Teach by Institution, Rules,
Law, and Discipline: As Gideon is said
to have Taught the Men of Succoth,
with Briars and Thorns; together with
his remembring them of their Scorn put
upon him. That is, when thou dost
secretly call him to an account, and Re-
prove him by Reason, by Arguments of
Conviction, and by Self-condemnation:
thou makest his beauty, &c. Here is a-

nother Word considerable; the effects
and issue of these stroaks do terminate
upon things that are *most valuable, pre-
cious, and desirable*; by which a Man
doth Prefer himself and esteem himself,
Such as his Health and Strength, his
Wealth, his Friends, the Use of his
Parts, his Wit and his Brain, his Rea-

חֲמִידָה
*Ejus desi-
derium:
Desidera-
bile ejus.
Quicquid
in eo est
desidera-*

*ble. Things of value, and esteem. Dan. 10. 3. Parris desideriorum,
Pleasant Bread, Things nearest, and dearest, most valuable, desirable by
the persons suffering.*

Vol. I.

son and Understanding, his Internal Joy, mental Satisfaction, and Self-joyment: these come to nothing, when God Rebukes; these *consume and melt away*, as the Word signifies. The issue exprest by the Verb, is no sudden, violent motion, but that which we call a *Dying Life*, or a *Lingring Death*, as the Scripture elsewhere useth it; and as it is used *Joshua 5. 1*, when the Kings of the *Amorites*, and the Kings of the *Canaanites* heard that the Waters of *Jordan* were dried up before the Children of *Israel*, their Hearts *melted away*; and *Pf. 107. 26*, their Soul *melted away*, because of trouble. So when God comes to call a great Sinner to an account, and to enquire of him; he is so far from giving any account, or making any Apology, that he *melts away*, sinks under Confusion, and falls under the Charge of the Almighty. So that I would read the Words thus. *When thou with secret Rebukes dost charge a Person for his secret Iniquities, thou makest his beauty, the things that he values himself by, to consume away like a moth.*

God can immediately by his Influence Fortifie and Encourage a Man's Mind;

or

or else throw him down into Discontent and frowardness. For the Minds and Spirits of men lye open to God, as much as ought of the Creation ; and there is the most inward Relation between the Creator and the Creature ; and wherein soever a man can keep out all created power, (the World, the Devil, yea, the Angels of glory) there he cannot keep out God : For God can call to Adversity ; God can call off all other Avocations ; and then man must mind what God will have him consider. When God will, the hearts of men will serve them, and be more than themselves ; and if God withdraws, they come to nothing. And indeed that that is truly and strictly mans Weal, or Woe, depends upon That, which passeth between God and a Mans Soul ; the terms that are between God and a Mans self. How contented are some men in a condition that the World doth despise ? and how much discontent in others, that live in worldly splendour ? Therefore the difference must arise from the Temper of men's minds, and the Thoughts that men have of the terms that are between God and themselves. 'Tis this notion that is in Gods Answer to *Moses* praying for

Vol. I. *his Sister Miriam : Num. 12. 14. If her Father had but spit in her face, should she not have been ashamed seven days ? How much more when the Discountenancing is from the Father of Spirits ? In speaking to this point, I shall consider two things.*

1. *Whereby chiefly God doth thus Blast men ; how it is brought about, and whereby it comes to pass.*

2. *In what special cases, we may fear Judgments in this sort : Hearing from God in this worst sense.*

For the 1st, I shall give an account in six particulars.

1. These secret Rebukes may lye in Gods suffering the *Foundation of Nature to fail, and sink* ; so that Men do not continue in the true use of Reason, and Understanding : Where Men wholly cease to be themselves, as to the reason of their minds ; or else what remains of men's Reason, is not for themselves, but is turned against them. As in the case of *Achitophel* and *Judas* : they were so dispossessed of the true Use of the Reason of their Minds, that they do such acts against themselves, as the Animal principle keeps all creatures below us from : (For what creature was ever known to be accessory to its own Destruction ?)

struction ?) And which *They* would never have done, had they continued in the true Use of their Understandings. This therefore is one way, that God can Challenge the Arbitrariness of his Creatures ; either by suffering the *foundation of Nature to fail*, so that men may not have *the true Use* of their Reason and Understanding : or what they have left, they have for *their own Disadvantage*. As often you see persons of Wit and Cunning have had no better Use of their Reason and Understanding, than to Reason against all Counsels that are given them for their advantage. This is a dreadful way, and we have reason to thank God, that he doth Uphold the foundation of our Natures, and Continues us in the Use of true and solid Reason.

2. This may be brought to pass, by *Disaffecting the mind of man toward worldly contentment*, and satisfaction ; so that the *Subsidia Vitæ*, the conveniences and accommodations of Life are not Relished ; but prove Sapiless, without Savour, or Relish. The palate of the Soul is out of Taste ; so as to Relish nothing. *Eccles. 1. 24.* It is best freely to enjoy ; but through this Judgment of God, there is

Vol. I. is no more Taste than in the white of
 an Egg, Job 6. 6. God can throw men
 out of the possession of those things, as
 to Self-enjoyment in them, whereof
 they continue the Legal Owners, in *foro*
hominum. For a man may *possess* several
 things which he may call his *Own*; and
 yet he himself *Enjoy* no contentment in
 them, no satisfaction from them. This
 Solomon hath observed in his survey, in
 the Book of *Ecclesiastes*; A man that
 hath Right and Titles, and no enjoy-
 ment: and he Resolves, that it is best
 for a man to take his part of all things
 he calls his own in the world: And a
 man is twice his own in those things he
 calls his own, if he have the power to
 Use and enjoy them. And he tells us,
 that *there is one alone, and there is not a*
second, yea, he hath neither Child nor Bro-
ther, &c. Eccl. 4. 8. and yet he pinch-
 eth himself, and streightneth himself,
 and never asketh himself the Question
 for whose sake he doth it: And he con-
 cludes that it is the Blessing of God up-
 on a man, when he can afford himself
 the free Use of all, that he calls his
 own: And it is the Judgment of God
 upon Base minds, that, though they
 have, they have no Enjoyment; they
 have

Ecccl. 6. 2.

Blasting of Men.

139

have no power to Use that which they **Disc.**
have; neither can Gratifie themselves, 
nor do any good with it. They are
Slaves to their own Estates; they *have*,
and they *have not*. This I reckon Gods
plague upon a mans mind, That he hath
no true Enjoyment of that which is his
own.

3. This may be done by Gods Inhibit-
ing, or *Suspending* the *Vertue* of *several*
creatures, which otherwise would be
very proper to give a Man Diversion, or
ease, or fitting Supply. For, *nothing is*
any thing, any longer than God will have
it. That God that stopped the mouth of **Dan. 6.**
the Lions that they could not feed upon
Daniel; that God, that could forbid **Dan. 3.**
the fire from burning the Three Chil-
dren; that God can make every creature
a Comfort, and Instrumental for our
good, when he pleaseth. The hungry
Raven at his bidding will be a messenger
to bring wholsom food to a Prophet. As **1. King. 17. 4, 6.**
God can refresh the Earth by drops from
Heaven, so he can make the *Heaven over* **Deut. 28.**
our head to be Brass. and the Earth to be **23.**
Iron; so that they shall not bring forth.
Yea, he can make the rain that falls up-
on a Mans ground, Powder and Dust,
Dent. 28. 24. He can, not only give
Rain,

Vol. I. Rain, which all the Idols of the Nations cannot do, *Jer.* 14. 22. so *Job* 5. 10. But also water the Earth with the River of God, making it soft with Showers, *Pf.* 69. 9, 10. and give us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food, and gladness, *Act.* 14. 17. We are to understand that all things whatsoever, act in the power and Vertue of the Principle that God planted in them, in the first moment of the Creation. Now it is in God, that gave them several Virtues, to Inhibit and Suspend them. This is so great a Truth, that I have Testimony for it beyond all exception. It was acknowledged by a Spirit, of which we can give no Account; the Spirit that was conjured up to give *Saul* an Answer, saith this Spirit (which is supposed to be an infernal Spirit) *wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy.* If God Inhibit, all creatures are at a loss: if God forsake a man, he is undone to eternity: and this is acknowledged from Hell, as all suppose; for *this* Spirit saith it.

4. God may do this by *Withdrawing his Blessing* from men's Endeavours; so that they become Unprosperous, and the

Blasting of Men.

141

the Happy issues of Providence are Inter-
cepted. This we have experience of, Dis. VI.
that many times Things Politickly con-
trived; and carried on with power, Fail,
and Miscarry, and come to nothing :
and this is because God is not there.
Other times, you have Things weakly
Managed, and unlikely instruments, and
yet great Success, and things fall out a-
bove expectation : no Account to be gi-
ven of this, but Gods Blessing and As-
sistance. This is that which the Wise
man hath observed, that the *Race is not
always to the swift, nor the battel to the
strong, &c.* but as himself observes,
*Eccl. 2. 26. God gives to a man that is
good in his sight ; Wisdom, and know-
ledge, and joy : but to the sinner he giveth
Travail, to gather and to heap up ; to
gather by hard labour, and much
pains taking ; but he hath no Joy in it ;
but he Reserves it to give to the man that
is upright in his sight.* And this is ano-
ther way, Gods withdrawing his Bles-
sings from men's Endeavours : and can
any one be Prosperous, when God's curse
is upon him ? It is the *blessing of God* Pro. 10.
23.
makes rich : If there be a cross provi-
dence, a man may endeavour, and to
little purpose.

5. God

Vol. I.

5. God can do this by *Awakening the Guilt* of the Sinner upon his Conscience; making that to Sting and Gaul him; and then all the world is nothing. Many sinners sin themselves into Stupidity and Sencelesness. Others relieve themselves by running into Company, and other Avocations: but if God do but Quickenthe Guilt of Sin upon mens Consciences, they are thrown out of all Possession. Now to do this, there needs no more, but to call men to Advertency; no more but to hold men to Thoughtfulness; there needs no more from God, but to Shut men up, and Confine them, that they be not relieved by Avocations, and other Employments. Where there is Malignity, and guilt upon the *conscience*, unremoved by Repentance; there God needs no more than to hold a man to converse with himself: and it is a marvel how this man stays in his wits. A great Offender being at Ease, hath no better Settlement, and Security, than this, that he is in an Hurry, and hath not yet Leisure to Bethink himself.

Conscien-
tia Sce-
tis.

6. This may be done when Men through their *own Fear, Suspicion* and Jealousy, have certain Foretastes of Gods refusal and Displeasure. We find by
expe-

Blasting of Men.

143

experience, that Things are as we imagine. Now whether this be the Truth of the case, or no, (Desertion of God) yet it is all one to me, if I think so.

Dis. VI.
~~~~~  
Estimantibus res sunt.

Thus God may give Men up to their own Melancholy conceits. There is no Security to any Mans Peace or Satisfaction in this Life ; or substantial Self-enjoyment, but two ways. 1st, That he hath always Retained his Innocence. The 2d is, that he is Restored and recovered to his Innocence, by his Repentance, and Gods Pardon ; in, and through the blood of *Christ*. And if a Man hath not one of these two, he is Unsecure, and no Man knows the condition he may be in, the next hour.

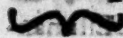
Primum est non peccasse : proximum est penituisse.

In these *Six particulars*, I have given you an Account of these *secret Rebukes* of God, which the sinner cannot bear up under ; but when he feels them, if he be not Upheld by the hand of God, and that he be brought into Reconciliation with God, upon the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, he will *melt away*, and come to nothing. This for the 1st, The

2d, Is the case wherein there is *imminent Danger* of such Judgments as these ; and I will give you *Six cases*.

1. The

Vol. 1



12

Vulnera  
mentis.  
Cruciatus  
cordis.

1. The case of *Havocking conscience*, by sinning against the Light of our own proper Judgment: And in this case, a Man doth himself inward Hurt, he gives himself a wound at the heart: And the wounds of the mind, are the Torture of a Mans Soul; and *All the world will not secure that Man, that is not in Reconciliation with the Reason of his own mind.* To be sensible of *this*, that a man hath contradicted his own proper Light: in this case a man doth an act of Violence upon himself; a man cannot do himself greater Wrong than by this *voluntary consenting to known Iniquity.* And this I account the true notion of Sin, *voluntarily to consent to known Iniquity*; and this is that which Separates between us, and our God. If a man once voluntarily consent to known *sin*, he parts with the truest friend (next to God) that he hath in the world, his Conscience of Right: that bosom Friend, his only Adviser and Councillor, which will keep a man company when he hath no Company else: that will give him Content, and Satisfaction in all conditions; that will give Testimony to him, though he be Slandered, calumniated; and though all the Mischiefs in the world fall upon him;



him. This friend is never put away, but by that by which God is put away, viz. Voluntary consenting to known iniquity : and this puts God away, and puts away this home-friend, Conscience of Right. If a man have no Internal Guilt, know no Fault within himself, he will be Able to bear up against all the World, and he will have Satisfaction in every Condition : but if he parts with *this*, he parts with his best friend, gives God offence, and causes him to Withdraw, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* This is the first case of eminent Danger of these Judgments, these *Rebukes in secret.*

Tacitâ  
sudent  
præcordia  
culpâ.  
Hic mu-  
rus æthe-  
neus esto;  
nil con-  
scire sibi,  
nulla pal-  
lescere  
culpâ.

2. The 2d case that I represent as Dangerous, is the case of *Hypocrisie*, Dissimulation, and Falshood : and this is equal to the other. The false-hearted Hypocrite is neither True to God, nor man ; but Serves himself, and his own ends of God, of the World, of Truth, of Religion : and all these he Subordinates to his own particular Ends, and purposes ; only he Pretends otherwise, and to cover a bad Design he doth

Vol. I. use soft words. But how Restless must this man be in his own thoughts, when he comes to consider? For can he Depend upon these, that these Persons, or Things will do him any Good at all, when he knoweth he hath Abused the persons, and Misused the things? No certainly, this man cannot think that either God, or Man will be true to him, and so can have no confidence in either. For, whosoever is himself False, perfidious, and base, he doth not know whom he may Trust: for he doth not think there may be a Better man than himself: and being sensible of his own internal Baseness, that he doth not mean what he saith to others; he verily believes all Others to be as he is; and so finding himself Unable to defend himself, he must be in Fear of all the world. Therefore it is of necessity, that a Hypocrite be in no true state of Satisfaction, or Self-enjoyment.

3. The case of *Shameless Apostacy*, represented Heb. 10. 26, 27, 28. For, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, &c. Where the Sin is a wilful departure; and the Sinner

ner doth *despite to the spirit of grace* ; Dis. VI.  
and he doth this knowingly, and considering what he doth ; the Danger is, there is no Hope of Recovery, because he hath taken his Choice, and contracted Senselessness of mind ; that he is in a condition without hope. For thus will men think with themselves ; when these men come to consider, they cannot but think that God should do with them, as he finds cause to do, since they have done by God, what they had a mind to do: Certainly *they who do worst by Religion, shall fare the worst by Irreligion.* Ignorance and incapacity, on any terms whatsoever, hold no Proportion in Malignity, with this wicked Averfation from God, and the ways of Righteousness. The Apostle puts the case, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Do but consider : What do Men in such a case as this ? If one of great Acquaintance and converse prove an Enemy and become Perfidious ; men had rather trust a Stranger than him : for it is the maxim of the world ( I confess it is not Christian) never trust a Reconciled Friend.

4. When men *take up with the world,* and *leave God out,* give themselves up to take delight and satisfaction in their worldly



Vol. I. worldly Accommodations, and leave  
~~~~ God out: *this*, though it be far short  
in malignity, of the other three, yet *this*
hath in it the full Spirit of Irreligion:
and 'tis a high provocation of God; for
it comes to this, God is little in their
thoughts, *God is far from their Reins.*
For is it not very fit that we have a
lively Sense of God, of the Benefits we
receive from him? Now for a man to
sit down in the world, and enjoy his
affluence and abundance, and make no
acknowledgment of God, this is down-
right Irreligion: and this is, *to make*
him, that is all in all to us, and better
than all; nothing at all to us, and lower
than all: and these men cannot but
think, if ever they come to a streight,
that this may be God's answer, what
come you now to me for in your neces-
sity? As it is said in *Judges 10. 14. Go*
and cry unto the God which ye have chosen.
Relieve your selves by these things you
take delight in: you thought not at all
of me; you thought your selves suffi-
ciently provided for, and wherefore
come you now to me? go to the Idols
you have chosen, let them deliver you
in the time of your Tribulation. So
here, I have represented to you four de-
sperate states. But,

5. There is the case of Priviledge and D. VII.
Exemption from outward Punishment. A 
 man that is an Evil doer, and a constant
 practicer of Sin, hath cause to fear. If
 through his *Power*, or the advantage of
 the times, he is not in fear of any ones
 stroak, undoubtedly *that man* is more in
 danger in respect of God, and these In-
 ternal Stroaks of God dispossessing him
 of what he hath. This you must know,
 that it sometimes comes to pass, that
 the All Gracious God will not, (not-
 withstanding the high Provocations of
 some irreligious persons) he will not
 Disturb the outward Peace, for such
 Reasons as these; Sometimes for his
 Infinite Patience, and no man knows the
 length of Gods patience; sometimes he
 will forbear, for the sake of those that
 worship him. God hath special Regard
 to the Multitude of Innocent, harmless
 Creatures, such as are *persons of mean E-*
states, but harmless; and *Children*, yea, ^{Jonah 4.}
 for the *Beasts themselves*, as in the case of ^{11.}
Nineveh. Now in such cases as these,
 that God will extend his Patience, be-
 yond what in reason we can imagine;
 and that he will specially gratify the
 Number of his Worshipers, and that he
 will suspend Judgments in respect of

Vol. I. Harmless people, and Children; then in this case, great Sinners have cause to fear Gods Dealing with them *in private*. For God hath ways to deal with men in private, by letting them sink down into darkness of mind, &c. And therefore if any man knows he is deeply obnoxious to God, and yet Prospers in the World, he hath great cause to fear that he shall hear from God, by *Secret Rebukes*, whereby he shall *melt away and come to nothing*. The

6th, and last Case is, the case of *high Spiritual advantages*. Where there is powerful, and effectual means; but through a contracted hardness, they prove altogether Inoperative, and without Effect. And *this* was the Condemnation of *Capernaum, Coraizin and Bethsaida*. But of this I shall give you a further account the next opportunity.

Lu. 10. 13,
15.

And thus have I represented to you, as the *Ways* whereby these *secret Rebukes* of God are brought about; so also the eminent cases of *Danger*.

DISCOURSE VII.

Ps. 39. 11.

*When thou with rebukes dost correct
man for iniquity, thou makest his
beauty to consume away like a
moth, surely every man is vanity.
Selah.*

WHEN I took this Scripture in D. VII.
Hand, I thought I had but
little to offer to your consideration;
and thought at once, to have dis-
patched all. But well weighing and
considering the consequence and Import
of the matter of these words, than
which nothing more in all the World
tends to the laying a solid Foundation
of conscience, and engaging of Men in
respect of the secret sense of their minds,

L 4

to

Vol. I. to stand aright in the sight of God ;
 I therefore cannot take my hands off,
 and though I have offered many things,
 yet some few more remain.

I have given you an Account why
 I have explicated these words of
 those things that pass immediately
 between God, and the Spirit of Man,
 whereof By-standers know but little ;
 They may discern the effects, see Men
 wither, and come to nothing ; but the
 cause (which is in secret between God
 and them) they feel not ; they know
 not. The last day I gave you an Account
 how the *Hebrew* words in the text led
 me to this notion of those Impressions
 that God makes upon the minds of Men
 by way of Reason and Argument, when
 he comes to Challenge, Convince and
 Reprove them ; the Reason of their
 own mind fails them, they cannot Justi-
 fie themselves, or bear up against God.
 And therefore I read the words, when
 Thou with secret Rebukes dost charge a
 person for his secret iniquities, thou makest
 his beauty, viz. his Reason, and Under-
 standing ; his Wit and Parts, those things
 that he Values himself by, to Consume away
 like a moth, &c.

Blasting of Men.

153

I have shewed in *six* Instances where-
by this comes to pass. D. VII.

I have also shewed you in part the great Provocation of God to deal thus with men : to confound them in their inward parts, to beat them out of the sense of their own Reason ; and leave them Self-condemned ; so that they retain no Priviledge of Self-enjoyment. And I have instanced in *six cases*, which do properly lead men into this condition.

1. The case of *Hawocking Conscience*, by sinning against the sense of their own judgment.

2. The case of *Hypocrisie*, dissimulation, and falshood : when men do not honestly Mean, nor really Intend.

3. The case of Shameless *Apostacy*.

4. (Which is yet inferiour to the other three, but yet Bad enough) the case of *Irreligion*, when men give God no place, are taken up with their own outward Accommodations, and have no sense of God ; when he is not, by those good things, Endear'd or Recommended to them ; this is downright Irreligion.

5. The case of *exemption from outward punishment*. As whensoever it pleaseth
God

Vol. I. God (as sometimes it doth) to make use of his infinite Patience : For who among us knows the length of Gods Patience ? and upon that consideration, he will Forbear the world, notwithstanding Prophaneness and declared Atheism.

Or whensoever God is pleased out of respect to his *worshippers*, or out of his compassion towards innocent Infants, and harmless Creatures, to keep off Judgments ; then is it to be thought that those persons that are Wilful Sinners, &c. shall hear from God *in private* ; to abate their Confidence, and to shew how exorbitant they are, in their ways. This God can do, by letting them Sink down into mental Distraction, &c. For God can Dispossess a man of all his Comforts, by not giving him Power of Self-enjoyment, and taking content. For *this* of the two, is a far greater mercy of God, for a man to have Less, and a contented mind ; than to have much more, and not have satisfaction. For power of Self-enjoyment is a far greater thing than Right and Title.

It comes to pass sometimes, that great Offenders do avoid the hands of men, either
either

Blasting of Men.

155

D. VII.

either through the undue favour of partial Judges, or sometimes by great Friends, or some worldly Interest, or Craft, or Cunning; or sometimes a thing is acted in secret, and cannot be legally proved (as what more ordinary than secret murders;) when it cannot at all be Proved at a distance of time, the guilty cannot be at peace, and their own mouths must betray them. In these cases, it is most likely, these persons will hear from God.

6. In the last place the case of *high Spiritual Advantages*. That was the aggravation of the Sin of Capernaum, Corazin, and Bethsaida that they were *Lifted up to Heaven*; and they are threatned, to be *thrown down into Hell*. For if the mighty works that were done in them, had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they had repented: And this is the aggravation. And this is an Observation, You never read of a Sin that cannot be Pardoned, till you read of the extraordinary Gift of the H. Ghost. The case that is represented *Isaiah 6. 9, 10*, all desperate cases refer to. And he said, *go tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy,*
and

Lu. 10. 13,

15.

Matt. 11.

21, 23.

Vol. I and shut their eyes: Lest they see with
 ~~~~~ their eyes, and hear with their ears, and  
 understand with their heart, and convert

Mat. 13. and be healed. All desperate conditions  
 34. refer to this, every one of the four  
 Mar. 4. 12. Evangelists relate that our Saviour refers  
 Lu. 8. 10. cases to it: It is referred to in the Acts  
 Joh. 12. 40 of the Apostles and by St Paul to the  
 Act. 28. Romans 11. 8. Here it is in the first  
 Rom. 11. 8. copy, and all after instances are after this  
 8. example. When Men dally in Religi-  
 on, Dissemble with God, give God high  
 offences, Provoke and Exasperate him to  
 displeasure, by their trifling and dallying,  
 and hypocrisy, and dissimulation, and  
 Irreligion, and living in sin; then it  
 comes to the case which is Represented  
 in the Prophet *Isaiah*. This notion is  
 declared, *Amos 3. 2. You only have I*  
*known of all the Families of the earth;*  
*therefore I will punish you for all your In-*  
*iquities.* And this best complies with the  
 Reason of the thing, and holds the fit-  
 test Proportion; That they who have  
 had the greatest Opportunities and have  
 been most wanting to themselves;  
 and continue in their Iniquities, and  
 give themselves leave to sin, which  
 are the worst of Sinners; that Judg-  
 ments should befall them. And it is rea-  
 sonable.



sonable, that God should recompence *D. VII.*  
*Spiritual Sins by Spiritual Judgments:* ~~~~~

and these are, a Reprobate state, a sear-  
ed Conscience, a blinded Understanding:  
and that is the worst condition;  
for this man is remotest from Repen-  
tance; and Repentance is the Recove-  
ry. Or else that they be under the  
dreadful and fearful Apprehensions of  
an Illuminated and Misgiving mind;  
and so upon a continual Rack and Tor-  
ture. Now these *Mental Judgments*  
they have a peculiarity to the Visible  
Church: and are much more within  
the compass of the visible Church, than  
in the wilderness of the World. Thus  
I have represented to you, the *Cases*:  
now I come to make some *Application*.  
I will make these Inferences.

1. Hence we have an *Account* of men's  
Withering in the world, taking little  
or no Delight in their affairs; though  
in no bad circumstances, do not enjoy *Pf. 91. 6.*  
themselves. We wonder sometimes, that  
men cannot be content; they want no-  
thing, neither Friends, nor Estates, nor  
any other convenience of life; men in  
shorter conditions by far, enjoy them-  
selves upon much better Terms; here  
is the *Account*: there are *secret Judg-  
ments*

Vol. I. *ments of God; Judgments that work in darkness. There is no wonder that men cannot hold up their heads, when they are neither at Peace with God, nor at Peace with their own Consciences: and all these things that are without a man, will make no more Recompence for the Want of the peace of Conscience; than it will make a Recompence for the pain of the Gout, to lye upon a bed of Down. Men have no Peace, neither with God, because not Reconciled to the Nature, Mind, nor Will of God; nor have they peace in their own Consciences, because under guilt. Therefore no wonder that Friends and Revenues, &c. will not Relieve them; they have an internal wound. In this respect I may truly say that*

1 Tim. 5: Mens sin go before them into judgment.  
24. I will give you some Instances.

It was something in secret between Cain and his Conscience, that his Countenance tell: For he had Sacrificed, as well as his Brother Abel: But it was something within him. Another Instance,

1 Sam. 25: In Nabal, his heart died within him.  
37. upon his Wives words only; which is strange; for a Covetous miserable wretch will

## Blasting of Men.

159

will most commonly endure words hard D. VII.  
 enough : For words break no bones, but  
 the Text tells us *God struck him.* V. 38.

Another Instance. God defeats the  
 Counsel of *Achitophel* : and he cannot  
 bear it, but goes and makes away him-  
 self: 2 Sam. 17. 14, 23.

Again. *Judas* he had his bargain, Mat. 27.  
 he had received the price of innocent 3. 4. 5.  
 blood : why could not he enjoy it?  
 He might have enjoyed it for any De-  
 mand of those that paid it him, for  
 they would not meddle with it again.  
 Had *Judas* been in the same temper of  
 mind he was in before he did that ill  
 act ; he might have Enjoyed himself as  
 happily as so much money would have  
 made him: but it was too hot for his  
 fingers. We are not sure of taking any  
 Comfort, if we leave God out.

Another Instance: *Ananias* and *Sa- A& 3. 9.*  
*phira* : they might have come off for  
 noble Benefactors, and received the  
 thanks of the Church, had they not  
 Dissembled with Him who searcheth the  
 hearts; and had He not found them  
 guilty of *lying to the H. Ghost.* It is a Heb. 10.  
*dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the* 31.  
*Living God* : of him that can not only Matt. 10.  
 kill the Body, but the Soul. And how 23.  
 doth



Vol. I. doth God *kill the Soul* which is immortal, but by Discountenancing it, and letting it fall down into Darknes.

Here are instances of *Bad Men*. But I will instance in better kind of Men, that make sad complaint when there is any thing in this kind.

*bitter* The 1st, is of *Job* : *Job* 3. 20. *Wherefore is there life to the Man that is bitter in Soul ?* and *Job* 13. 26. *Thou writest things against me.* Here is a Representation from a *Good Man* of the sadness of this condition.

Next the case of *David*, *Pf.* 51. 9. *Job.* 6. 4. *Make me to hear of Joy and Gladness that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.* 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.* 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, uphold me with thy free Spirit.* When *David* felt this case, see how he expresseth it.

*Asaph.* Another *Good Man*, *Pf.* 77. 2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, my sore ran in the night, and ceased not, my soul refused to be comforted.* 3. *I remembered God and was troubled, I complained and my Spirit was overwhelmed, Selah.* 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more.* 8. *Is his mercy clear*

clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail D. VII.  
for ever more. 9. Hath God forgotten to  
be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his  
tender mercy? Selah. See the sadness  
of men in this forlorn and lost state and  
condition, when God comes to apply  
himself secretly to mens spirit, and doth  
inwardly Reprove. The like you have  
in Ps. 90. 11. *Who knoweth the power of  
thine anger, even according to thy fear so  
is this wrath.* You know Fear ante-  
dates evil; and Multiplies evil: Men  
commonly fear more than there is. The  
like case you have in *Isaiah 57. 16. I will  
not contend for ever, neither will I be al-  
ways wroth, for the spirit should fail be-  
fore me, and the Souls which I have made.*  
This Scripture holds forth this notion  
fully to you, that I have been so long  
upon, v. 17. *For the iniquity of his Co-  
vetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I  
hid me, and was wroth; and he went on  
frowardly in the way of his heart, v. 18.  
I have seen his ways and will heal him, I  
will lead him also, and restore comforts  
unto him, and to his mourners. 19. I  
create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to  
him that is near, saith the Lord, and I  
will heal him. 20. But the wicked are  
like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest,*  
M whose

Vol. I. whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked. So Dent. 32: 39. See now that I even I am he, and there is no God with me, I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal : neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. God killeth and God makes alive, by these internal Rebukes, by these Impressions that God makes upon the mind in case of Offence ; in case of consenting to iniquity. These are called Gods killing a mans soul : for no man can bear up against God ; neither can he live under the Reproofs of God. This is a true Account, that man cannot be Happy in the World, tho he may call never so much of the World his own ; though he hath Estate, Friends, Power, Authority, &c. Unless God be with him in some Measure, he is not sure to have content ; so true is this, that when God with rebukes, &c.

1 Sam. 2.  
6.

But to prevent mistakes I here suggest two things to you, which being taken into consideration, I cannot be misunderstood in any thing that I have said.

1. This Notion doth concern the Two opposite States ; Reconciliation with God, and the contrary : If men trifle in Religion, or if they continue Profane and Irreli-



Irreligious. None can be himself long-  
er then God is with him ; or at least  
will suffer him. 

2. Which I must take in (for I must discourage no body ) you must give great Allowance for the minds misapprehension through *Mistaken notions*, and to persons that are under the power of *Melancholy*. He that is *Melancholick*, believes nothing from any body ; he saith nothing right to any body ; and he is too severe in his measure of himself. And then there are some good people, who are under false apprehensions, and under the power of *Mistaken notions* ; and till they be rid of these, their Peace is not well secured.

This is the 1st *Inference*. The 2d thing, that I *Infer* upon the former discourse, is this. If men would be true to themselves, and not depart from their own mercy ; if men would, in a true sense, favour themselves, not do themselves that Mischief, that the Devil and the world cannot do : Let them then keep within Compass, let them not Betray themselves ; let them *not give Voluntary Consent to known Evil* ; let them not become obnoxious to God ; but let men have God greatly in regard, and

Vol. I. above all things, keep in good terms with him, and endeavour by all means, to approve themselves to Him. Undoubtedly a man is altogether insecure, unless there be terms of right understanding between God and Him. If a man have not a conscience free from guilt, he is in danger, obnoxious to God, and is not secure against the Malignity of the world. This for certain, the security and Solidity of our Peace, is settled upon the Reality of the terms that are between God and us. But, if men are obnoxious to God, by having knowingly consented to iniquity; for that is the *Characteristical* form of the degenerate State, that they do *voluntarily consent to known Iniquity*: If men become obnoxious to God, by giving their voluntary consents to that which their Judgments tell them is evil; if men contract guilt to their Consciences and Repent not and ask pardon in and through the blood of Christ; Then they are in fear and danger every moment: for at Gods sentence our souls Live, or dye: by his judgment, they are Absolved or Condemned. Wherefore it is fundamental to our Interest, that God be observed. It is a very lamentable case, that many men

men have Religion to very sorry ends D. VII.  
and Purposes; not for this great End  
of settling solid Sobriety, not for the  
laying a foundation of Right and Equity,  
not for the determination of Good  
and Evil, not for Rectifying of Conscience,  
not for Directing them in all cases  
and particulars of life; But it is taken  
up for a Profession in Credit; and it  
hath no Regenerating power on Men,  
inwardly to sanctifie them, and make  
them Godlike: In which case, *as they  
have not the Effect of it, so they have not  
the Comfort of it*: for they are never  
safe, never secure. Whereas, where  
Religion is in sincerity, persons are pro-  
vided for, as to all cases, and for all  
times: and these persons never think of  
God but with great complacency, and  
Delight; and have great expectations  
from Him; and they converse with  
great satisfaction. Our Weal and Woe  
depends upon our Interest with God.  
This is the 2d thing I infer from the  
words.

3. Upon this consideration how liable we are to Gods demand and Challenge, through failings, and Miscarriages in our Lives, what cause have we to think our selves beholden to God,



Vol. I. that we have *Encouragement to go to Him*, and that we find in our selves any *disposition Godward* ; any confidence in him. For we have reason to think that God may have taken Offence, and justly refuse us, and remember against us our former offences, when we make application to him : For as Guilty persons are in Danger, so are they also full of Jealousies, and suspicions and fears, &c.

Pro. 28.1. *the wicked flee when none pursue, but the righteous is as bold as a Lyon.* So that it is the wonderful grace of God to Fortifie and Encourage our minds to come to him ; and to cast our selves upon his mercy ; whereas we know we have given him Offence. We find it so in our fellow creatures ; where we have given offence, we have no confidence. We are therefore as much beholden to God for this, as for any thing else in the world ! Let us therefore think of our selves modestly, how short, and unworthy we are ; and think of God ingenuously, and be thankful to him for his goodness. What cause have we given to God to dispossess us of our selves, and to disaffect our minds towards worldly contentment, or to Suspend the virtue of the creatures to us,  
or

or to Withdraw his blessing from our D. VII. endeavours, or to Awaken the guilt of sin upon our Consciences, or to let fall some drops of his own Wrath upon us; and yet notwithstanding all our faultiness, through his great compassion, none of these evils have befallen us: But we continue in Life, and Health, and Strength, and power of Self-enjoyment, &c. and (which is more than all the rest, and settles all the rest) confidence in God, and boldness to make application to him.

Lastly, What value then should we put upon the *Grace of the Gospel*, which hath declared to us a new and living way to approach to God. That for us, who have frustrated the first continuances of wisdom, and lost the confidence of creatures; there is a *New and living way* through the grace of the Gospel, to approach to God; in which we may come to God with assurance, and confidence. It is a mighty place of Scripture, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart in assurance of Faith, &c.* The grace of the Gospel doth contain in it as well the disposition Qualifying the Subject; as Warranty, for the Authorizing of the Person. So that there

Vol. I. is Remedy against all manner of exception: either the Incapacity of the person, because he is Guilty; or the Indisposition of the party, because of Malignity: So Sovereign is the use of Repentance and Faith in the Lord Jesus. Thus have I finished this great point: And that which hath made me be so long upon this argument is because I have not found a more solid Foundation to settle and Establish Conscience toward God upon, than this is: since sinners become obnoxious to God, and no Power, no Privilege, no Wit, nor Cunning, no Friendship, no Worldly Interest, nor Advantage can give Defence against the strokes of God, to whose eyes all that is done lyes open. Therefore it is apparent, no Mans Estate hath Settlement, unless a Man be in Reconciliation with the Rule of Righteousness. If Men be inwardly Guilty, though no Man be privy, yet they are Unsafe, and Insecure. If Men be obnoxious to God, if he once come to Reprove, the foundation of their confidence will sink, and all that they think to shelter themselves by, will fail and disappear, and come to nothing. Therefore it is very necessary for Men to Fear God, and have him in due Regard;  
and



and be in Reconciliation with him. D. VII.

IV. The next observation is, That which is *Inferred: Surely every Man is Vanity.* Of which I will speak but a little, and so conclude.

Upon the consideration of the whole, the *Psalmist* doth *Infer Surely every Man is Vanity.*

1. Vanity, as being so subject to be *mistaken*: So liable to miscarry.

2. Vanity as being so *unable* to bear himself up against God against whom he doth offend; when God comes to require an account, and to reprove and challenge.

But a little further, to give you an Account, though these two were enough. Vanity may be charged upon Men in a *threefold way.*

1. In a *Negative Sense.*

2. In a *Comparative Sense,* and

3. In a *Privative Sense.*

1st, In a *Negative Sense,* man is vain: Every Creature is so, because he is *short of Divine perfection.* For a Creature is Primary to nothing, he hath no absolute being; for he comes into Being at Gods call, continues in being by his Maintenance and Allowance; and must leave this being, at his appointment. He is subject to Gods pleasure, so is vain in

a

Sub rati-  
one Crea-  
tura.

Vol. I. a Negative Sense ; in no moment of his life is he Independant neither for existence, nor in execution. For in God we live and move, and have our Being.

28.

2. Vain in a Comparative Sense, because he is short of the perfection of other Beings. Short of the divine perfection, nothing in comparison, *Isaiab 40. 15, 16, 17. Behold the Nations are as a drop of a Bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the ballance, behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing ; and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All Nations before him, are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.* And then short in perfection of some of his Fellow Creatures, short of Angelical perfection. *Thou madest* *Pf. 8. 5. him a little lower than the Angels : yet it* *Job 4. 18. is said, God chargeth the Angels with folly ;* not imputing any Moral defect to the Angels, but an Incompetition to the Divine Perfections ; and man made lower than the Angels. Now shortness in these two considerations is no bodies disparagement ; for this is to be a Creature : and herein any man is as good as God would have him. But I wish I could excuse mankind from Vanity in the

3d Sense, That is our fault and our shame, for man is vain in a *Privative* Sense. This is that that doth Sink and Deface, and Deform the glorious Workmanship of God in the moment of his creation. And this lies in six things.

*Miseri-  
mum est  
fuisse fe-  
licem.*

1. A man is *divested of his innocence*. He is out of the Image of God, his high Perfection, which he was invested with in the moment of his Creation. He has lost his proper Perfection, hath lost more than the whole Creation can repair.

2. By his iniquity he hath *contracted Impotency*. By giving God offence, and departing from God, we have lost our Innocence; and brought upon ourselves Dread and Terror, and Horrour of conscience: for this always accompani-  
es Guilt. And then

3dly, By *unnatural Use, our faculties are marred and spoiled*; the Ingenuity and Modesty of a Mans mind, and the Nobleness of his Understanding, is marred and spoiled most grievously. To this a sinner miserably wrongs himself by Sin. For if a man do but one act that is Unnatural and Horrid, he Abuses the Ingenuity, Candour and Nobleness of his mind for ever.

If



Vol. L

If a man once let go the fairness of his Nature, no man knows where he will stop. He is fit to do every desperate act of Sin. So that man is vain, because he hath lost his Innocence, and Deformed himself by his Sin; he hath *marred his Principles*, and made himself unfit for many good Acts, that he might have done.

Pf. 39. 6.

4. A man is Vain, by his lying apprehensions. *Man walketh in a vain shew.* A man is his own Fool, flatters himself into a Fools Paradise; Cheats, Delusions, Lyes rule in mens Lives. Man gives his consent to impostures. Man will believe, because he would have it. Man feeds upon Lies, Fancies, Imaginations. Mens hopes and fears; confidences and refuges are laid, as lying apprehensions and conceits misguide. *If. 28. 15.*

Facile  
credimus  
quæ Vo-  
lumus.

5. By his foolish undertakings. Man goeth rashly forth into act, neither well resolving concerning the Enemies of his action, nor duly considering his sufficiency to grapple with, and overcome difficulties.

Lu. 14. 31.

The vanity of man in issuing forth to act, consists in this (1.) That Man is *Sinister* in his *Intention*: Aims not right,  
mi-

mistakes the World for God (2.) That D. VII. man is *Irregular*, and inordinate in *motion*: Errs in choice and application of *Means* to his end. (3.) That man is *Frustrated*, and disappointed in the issue: after all costs, curseth his labour. After promising expectations, expensive ways, in the close of all, has a shadow for the substance. Hope deferred makes his heart sick; and the desire is not accomplished, which is a tree of Life. Pro. 13. 12.

6. By his inward *Perturbations*, man is vain. The affections of the Soul, have as well changed their *Name* as their *Use*. A man is always at difference, in Contestation with himself. *'Tis not in man a Monarchy of Reason, but a Democracy of Humours*. Man disturbs his own content and quiet. To enjoy a Mans self, is the greatest good in the world: The serenity and sweet composure of his Mind, is Happiness within: Yet Men easily dispose themselves, and throw themselves into Male-content. Were all the World else, in a Calm; yet Man will not be at quiet; he raiseth Storms and Tempests, makes foul weather within. We have not our selves in our own

Vol. I. own hands : We are not Masters of our Passions, Ends, and Undertakings.

Man *Fears*, where no Fear is, and so creates himself an Enemy, by his own Fancy : He dotingly *Loves* what will return nothing for affection : He runs out in *Hope*, where there is no ground for Expectation.

The *Uses* to be made of this are these.

1. There is no cause of *Pride*. Pre-  
sumption, Pride and Conceit, are the most  
ungrounded things in the World. Self-  
denial is the most Rational act. Why  
should we believe a Lye? Why do we make  
Tools of our selves, by fond Self-flat-  
tery? Man is *Vain* in his Existence : By  
PC 62.9. *Opinion* a Lyar. *Things* are not to con-  
form to our Apprehensions; but our  
Thoughts are to answer things. 'Tis  
our Misery to be deprived, but 'tis our  
Madness to be deceived, befooled.  
Otherwise, we affect to know things  
justly, as they are ; why are we not wil-  
ling to know our selves ?

2. What cause have we to Magnifie  
the rich Grace of God, who gave so  
great a price for us so little worth.  
The great Physician hath dearly bought  
diseased Patients. God hath bought  
Chaff



## Blasting of Men.

175

Chaff instead of Wheat; *Vanity* instead of Substance. It could not be therefore his Gain by us, that did direct his choice; but his compassion of our misery that procured us mercy.

What the grace of God finds us, and how Grace leaves us, are two things of greatest consideration. From the depth of Misery to the height of Excellency. Who deals with the Blind, Halt and Diseased, but God? We may say as *Job*, *Job. 14. 3.* *Dost thou open thine Eyes upon such an one.* *Lu. 14. 21.*

3. Let no Man believe himself, or lean to his own Understanding. He that trusteth in his own heart, is a Fool. Let the Grace of God be acknowledged, both for Wisdom, and for Strength. Nothing is better grounded than that Advice of Wisdom. *In all thy ways acknowledge him. If Egypt be a broken Reed: Which was never stronger, because a Reed; which will pierce him that leans on it, because broken: Is not he rash, and unadvised that Trusts, and hath confidence in such things? Better have no Confidence, than Self-Confidence: Which is as a Refuge of lyes: An hiding place that waters will overflow.* *Pro. 3. 5. Pro. 28. 26. If. 36, 6. If. 28. 17.*  
And

Vol. I. And Man is never so broken, as when he is frustrated in his Expectation.

4. Hence we have an Account of the general Madness that rules in the Commonwealth of Men. What can the Transaction be, when the Convention is made up of vain and empty Persons? The world is a very Chaos, and Confusion. So that, if Things be *tolerable* in the world, that is much more than we can groundedly expect from men.

Whatever is of any Consideration in the World, is to be Accounted to God, who made a *Chaos* and Confusion the Groundwork of a glorious Creation:

DIS. VIII.

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# DISCOURSE VIII.

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Preached before the Honourable  
House of Commons, Feb. 4. 1673.

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Jer. 6. 8.

*Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem,  
lest my soul depart from thee, lest  
I make thee desolate, a land not  
inhabited.*

**T**O Awaken your apprehensions up-  
on this occasion, I shall make use  
of the words of King *Hezekiah*, when  
he rent his cloaths, and covered himself  
with sackcloth, and went into the  
N House



Vol. I. House of the Lord, upon an occasion of *Sennacherib's* invading *Judah*, and sending reviling *Rabshekeh* to insult, and Triumph over them: his words were, *This is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of provocation, Isa. 37. 3.* For our further advantage upon this account, I will adjoyn the words of the Prophet, *Joel 2. 2. A day of Darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness: v. 3. A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burneth.* By fears and apprehensions people are appalled, and all faces gather blackness, *v. 6.* This seems much to suit with our condition; and if so, it becomes us (as *Ezra* sometimes did, *Ezra 9. 13.*) to make a due Acknowledgment to God, and to state things right: *for all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses; for God hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve, viz. in the late devouring Fire, and a little before in the Raging Pestilence, and by several other Judgments.* But now God hath given us a very great Deliverance, and we have Out-lived all these Judgments, and we have cause to say that God is Righteous, not in the sense that sometimes the word is taken, *viz. to* Punish

Punish condignly ; but Righteous in the D.VIII.  
sense of the Prophet, *Dan. 9. 7, 8, 9.* ~~~~~

*O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto Thee ;*  
which he explains v. 9. *To thee, O Lord,*  
*belongs Mercies and Forgiveness, though*  
*we have rebelled against Thee.* God hath  
been gracious, and God is Righteous ;  
he hath been gracious and Merciful ; for  
we are before God all of us in our  
Transgressions ; and we cannot stand  
before God because of them : Where-  
fore let us be Ingenuous, and let us  
Reason Gods cause with our selves, as  
Ezra once did with the people of Israel,  
*Should we again break thy Commandments,*  
*and joyn in affinity with a people of such*  
*abominations ; wouldst not thou be angry*  
*with us till thou hadst consumed us, so*  
*that there should be no remnant nor esca-*  
*ping,* Ezra 9. 14.

We profess, by our Assembly this  
day, to do what King *Hezekiah* did ;  
to make hearty Application to God, to  
humble our selves before Him, to de-  
precate his Offence, and displeasure,  
and to represent before him the sad  
and deplorable condition of the Nation.  
And to do also what the Prophet *Joel*  
called the people to : *Thus saith the Lord,*  
*Turn ye even to me, with all your heart,*  
N 2 *with*

Vol. I. *with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. And also what we find the Prophet, Jeremiah 4. 4. in the like case directing to ; Circumcise your selves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your heart, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings. Let us close with that of Daniel 4. 27. Break off your Sins by Righteousness, and your Iniquities by acts of Mercy, if there may be a lengthning of your tranquility. For a day of Humiliation, is a day of Repentance, in order to Reconciliation with God ; and the truth of Repentance lyes in real Reformation, in Leaving off sin ; in Conversion and turning to the Lord. It is not to bow down the Head as a bull-rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under us, Isa. 58. 5. But as the Ninevites did, who though a people that were not under any Institution of God, before the Prophet Jonah's Denunciation against them ( that we know of ) ; yet they teach us the true Nature of a Fast ; for they say, Cry mightily unto God, and let every one turn from the evil of his ways, and from the violence that is in his hands.*

*Jonah*



Jonah 3. 8. So the Prophets upon all occasions do insist, and lay stress upon the indispensable necessity of Morals ; by which I understand Things that are Good in themselves, Good in their own nature, and quality ; that are not only recommended to us by Institution. *Isa. 1. 16. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well.* This is the Prophets direction. And he speaks undervaluingly of Sacrifices of all sorts, tho the foundation of them was divine Institution. And as the Prophet begins, so he ends, *Isa. 66. 3, 4. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.* Wherefore what do Sacrifices in this case signifie ? No more than *slaying a man, or cutting off a dogs neck, or offering of swines blood : he that burneth Incense is as if he blessed an Idol.* These things were once commanded by God, and were acceptable to him, if men were not wanting in Moral duties : for there is no dispensation for Immorality, there is no dissembling with God ; he will not take Sacrifice at our hands, if we be not Refined in our Spirits, and Reformed in our Lives. It is but to cozen our selves, to think that any thing

Vol. I. will be an Apology with God, if we  
 ~~~~~ our selves do only pretend to Repent,  
 and do not Reform. *To do Justice, to
 walk humbly before God, and to shew Mer-
 cy, these are things beyond Thousands
 of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of
 Oyl ; more pleasing to God than if a
 man should give his first born for his
 Transgression, the fruit of his body for the
 sin of his soul, Mic. 6. 6, &c.*

It shall be my business this day, from
 this Scripture, to press not only what is
 External, and in shew ; but what is Vi-
 tal, Internal, Solid and Substantial in
 the motion of Repentance, which now
 the Nation doth profess in this solemn
 Application unto God. Our great and
 loud sins, they are the Things that ex-
 pose us to Gods displeasure, indignation
 and wrath, And because Generals do
 not Affect ; I shall Instance in some
 Particulars. Our Falseness and Trea-
 chery to the True Religion, in which
 this Nation hath Prospered above a
 Hundred years. Our Affected Atheism,
 and avowed Profaneness, beyond what
 former times have had experience of ;
 Our Wantonness and Licentiousness dis-
 graceful to Humane Nature : Our high
 Immoralities and Debaucheries in sever-
 ral

ral ways. These have brought the D.VIII.
 Judgments of God upon us, and turned
 God from us in displeasure. And none
 that is sober-minded can think other-
 wise, if he acknowledges Gods Govern-
 ment of the world, and doth consider
 that wickedness and unrighteousness are
 an abomination to him. For as *Moses*
 told the children of *Israel*, *Numbers* 32.
 23. *Our sins have found us out :* and as
 the widow of *Sarepta* said, *Art thou come*
to call my sins to remembrance? *1 Kings*
 17. 18. which words carry this Inti-
 mation, That if we hear from God in
 a way of Displeasure, we should suspect
 our selves, and find out the *Achan* that
 is among us. The Prophet *Micah* 6. 9.
 saith, *The Lords voice cryeth unto the Ci-*
ty; and then it follows, *Hear the Rod,*
and who hath appointed it.

In the words of the Text you have
 these things considerable.

I. The *Caution* or *Admonition*. *Be*
Instructed.

II. The *Ground*, and *Reasons* there-
 of. *Lest my soul depart from thee, lest*
I make thee desolate, a Land not inhabited.

I. Concerning the former, the *Caution*
 or *Admonition*, there are Three Enqui-
 ries to be made.

N 4

1. *Where-*

1. *Whereby* we are to be Instructed ?2. *Wherein* we are to be Instructed ?3. *What it is* to be Instructed ? or the Import of the words.1. For the first, *whereby* we are to be Instructed ? I answer,

By the State of Affairs, and By the Reason of Things, or the Right of Cases.

Things themselves speak to us, *Hear the Rod, and Him that hath appointed it*; and this the Prophet calls the Lords voice crying to the City, *Mic. 6. 9.* and tells us, *That the man of Understanding will be instructed by it.* Cases and Things, and the State of Affairs give us hints, and Intimations of what may befall us; They give notice and Presages of future events; and by these offer Notions to our minds, not to be neglected: By these *Soloman's* prudent man is instructed, and he doth Foresee the evil, and shunneth it, *Pro. 22. 3.* He foreseeth the evil consequences in their antecedents. Now this is to be supposed, that God teacheth us, by the State of Affairs, or by the Reason of Things; because All things are some way or other under Gods management. Some things are appointed, ordered, and disposed by God;

God ; in these He takes pleasure, He D.VIII.
declares his will, purpose and intention :
and here our subservience is required
and commanded. Things not allowed,
nor warranted by God, yet are permitted
by Him, else they could not be ;
for God could hinder them if he pleased:
but God permits them for Reasons of
great Wisdom and Prudence: and doth
not please by his irresistible power, to
hinder them. By these we may also be
Instructed ; and we do not enough acknowledge
God in the world, if we do
not think that He doth interpose, where
He is concerned. And wherein is he
not concerned ? Since we are required,
that *whatsoever we do in word or deed, to
do all to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.*
Since God makes overtures to us, and
gives us Intimations of what becomes us
to do, and how we ought to behave
our selves in the various Occurrences of
humane life. This is a great point of
Divinity, and it stands upon these foundations.

1. That God is a Being of *All Perfection*, of infinitely vast Comprehension
and Understanding and Power: and
therefore He is Able to attain those effects,
and to Teach men by All things
that

Vol. I. that fall under his Government.

2. That things *managed* by divine Wisdom are intensely virtual, significative, expressive of Notions, because they do partake of the excellency and sufficiency of their cause.

3. That God doth *Nothing in vain*, nor to fewer, or lesser Purposes than the things are capable to promote, or be subservient unto. For it concerns the Wisdom of any Agent to make the best Improvement of his Means: for a Means is inconsiderable but as it is conducive to its end, which in it self may be Sowre, or Costly; only considerable as in respect to its end.

4. Because the affairs of Mankind are the *choice piece* of the Administration of Providence: And God doth in a special manner, charge himself with Teaching the Mind of Man knowledge. Wherefore we may gather something directive of us, from all Gods Operations, or Permissions in the world: *In that day* (saith the Prophet Isa. 22. 12.) *did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping and mourning, and to baldness, &c. viz.* by the state of things. And it is this our Saviour complains of, Lu. 12. 56. *Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the Sky,*
and

and of the Earth : but how is it that ye cannot discern this time ? Upon this account it is said, that the *Goodness of God leads men to Repentance* ; and therefore He complains, *Rev. 2. 21. That he gave them space to Repent, but they repented not.* The patience of God in not inflicting Punishment, was an intimation to Repent. And because men were wanting herein, the Psalmist saith, *Pf. 28. 5. They understood not the works of God, nor the operation of his hands ;* but went on to tempt the Lord, and to provoke him to anger. In this sense it is said, *Job 5. 6. that Afflictions rise not out of the dust :* No mans afflictions are wholly casual or contingent, but are directed by an Intelligent Agent ; of which he may make a certain Interpretation to his own advantage ; and may make the interpretation to a determined Use : For all things, some way or other, refer to God ; and as God is concerned in them, they are Instructions of Righteousness, whether God does them, or only suffers them to be done ; whether he Rewards or Punishes. As I might instance in several things. When *Joseph's Brethren* sold him into *Egypt*, in respect of Second Causes, there is one
ac-

Vol. I. account of it ; and in respect of the
 ~~~~~ First, another ; *They did it for harm, but  
 God designed it for good, Gen. 45. 5.*  
 There was a very different Intention  
 in our Lord and Saviours Death, as it  
 referred to God, and as it referred to  
 the malicious *Jews* : In these 'twas an  
 expression of the greatest malice and  
 wickedness ; but God turned it to Good,  
 intending it as an *Expiatory Sacrifice* to  
 all those that Repent. *Sodom* and *Go-  
 morrah* were not barely punished for  
 their own sakes ; but for an Example  
 to all Generations that afterwards should  
 live ungodly, *Jude 7:* and *Heb. 4. 11.*  
 and *1 Cor. 10. 6.* *These things are our ex-  
 amples, to the intent that we should not  
 lust after evil things as they also lusted.*  
 I will satisfy my self with one place  
 more, and that is the Answer which  
 our Saviour returned to *John Baptist's*  
 Question, *Whether he was the person that  
 was to come, or they were to look for ano-  
 ther?* Our Saviour doth not answer  
 them that *John* sent, as it may be they  
 expected, by words, but by Things, Go  
 and tell *John* what things you have seen  
 and heard, ( *Luk. 7. 22.* ) *how the blind  
 see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,  
 the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.*  
 Our

Our Saviour would have him to under-D.VIII.  
stand by Things, as well as by Words ;  
by Things done, rather than by Words  
spoken : and by these, *John* might under-  
stand who He was. And our Savi-  
our upbraids those Cities where his  
mighty works were done, because they  
believed not: and tells them that *Tyre*  
and *Sydon*, yea, even *Sodom* would have  
Repented, if the mighty works had  
been done among them, which had  
been done in those Cities, *Matt.* 11. 20.  
This therefore is a certain Truth, and of  
great use; and shews that a man hath  
something to do, to know God in the  
World; that a man hath Reason,  
whereby to make interpretation of Oc-  
currences that happen: For if a man  
would know God in the world; he must  
both observe, and take notice of his Pro-  
vidence, and what falls out in the world,  
and make Interpretation of what is un-  
der Gods Management and Government.  
But because there may be great Danger  
of making false Interpretations of Pro-  
vidence, I will lay down this Caution.

All such *Interpretations* of occurrences  
of Providence, are to be made, accord-  
ing to the *Principles* of common Reason,  
and the plain guidance of the Holy  
Scri-



Vol. I. Scripture.: Not particular Fancy, but the plain guidance of the Holy Scripture; So shall we be secure from rash censure, and Uncharitableness on the one hand; and from the folly of Superstition, and wild Enthusiasm on the other hand; which hath been so remarkably prejudicial to the World, and brought such scandal on Religion.

And for this we have our Saviours example, *Lm.* 13. 2. When they came and askt him how great Sinners they were whose Blood *Pilate* mingled with their Sacrifices; he told them, that the import of that, and all other Occurrences of like Nature served for their Admonition, and to Instruct them that *Unless they did repent they should Perish*. But he rejects their uncharitable Application, as if they were greater Sinners than others. Let us therefore Interpret our selves into our known Duty, such as these, to fear God greatly in his Judgments, to reverence him, to leave off to Sin, to Repent and Amend our Lives: So shall we, as we ought, Acknowledge God in all his works. And so I have done with that head, *whereby* God doth Instruct us.

2. *Wherein* are we to be Instructed? D.VIII.

I answer in two things.

1. In matters of Gods Offence.

2. In Instances of our own Duty.

1. In matters of Gods Offence. For we are highly concerned in Gods favour or displeasure. For in his Favour there is Life; and if we walk in the light of his Countenance, he will put Joy and Gladness into our hearts. By *his Favour our Mountain is made strong*: But when he hideth his Face we are troubled; if he withdraw himself, we presently fall into confusion; therefore prays the Psalmist, Ps. 38. 1. *Rebuke me not in thine Anger, lest thine arrows stick fast within me.* We have many sad effects of Gods wrath all along in Scripture. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God; for our God is a consuming Fire.* And therefore Moses was afraid of Gods displeasure because of the Peoples Sins, and fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, neither eating Bread nor drinking Water, Deut. 9. 18.

There is no Defence for that man who is in danger in respect of God; and the desperateness of the condition lyes further in this; that this mischief is not alone; but a wounded Conscience

Vol. I.

ence accompanies it : and this is a misery beyond all expression, to have Almighty God, whose power no one can withstand, engaged against a person, and to have our own Conscience accusing, and condemning us also ; This is a state which causes Astonishment, both from without, and from within : A man then will be afraid to stay at home, or to enjoy his own thoughts, because of the troublesomeness and uneasiness of his own mind. And who can interpose in this case ? what can comfort, when God and Conscience doth condemn, and give testimony against a man ? These are Testimonies, against which there can be no Objection ; Gods Omniscience, and our own Conscience. Upon this comes the case which the Prophet represents, *Isa. 33. 14. The Sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites : who among us shall dwell with devouring fire ? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?* Thus it is, if there be not a true Understanding between God and us, and if we have not peace within, saith the wise man, *Prov. 18. 4. A wounded spirit who can bear ?* So much for the first thing, wherein we are Instructed ; the Matters of Gods Offence.



2. In the matters of *our Duty*; that is, *D.VIII.*  
 if we know it, to do it: if we have departed from it, to return unto it. If we have done the contrary, to revoke it with self-condemnation and humble deprecation. And if this be our case, let us be Gainers at least in this way, by our former losses; to become more sensible of our necessary dependance upon God, because of our frailty; to be more Modest and Humble, more cautious and wary, that we do not in like manner offend again. And so much for the two first, *whereby*, and *wherein* we should be instructed.

3. *What it is* to be instructed? Or the import of the words: and they comprehend these four gradual Acts.

1. To Search and Examine.

2. To Weigh and Consider.

3. To Understand and Discern.

4. To Do and Perform.

In the Book of the Proverbs, we have Wisdom personating a loving and tender Parent, directing and perswading his Son to receive Instruction. By Wisdom I here understand Consideration and Discretion, Advertency and weighing of Things in the Ballance of severe and im-

*Vol. I.* impartial Reason: In opposition to that  
 ~~~~~ Giddiness and Folly, that betrays men  
 to vice and wickedness, and all kinds of
 Immorality. For Folly and Inconsideration are the causes of the great depravation and Apostacy of mankind. There is nothing baser and more unbecoming Mankind, since the Beauty and Excellency of Humane Nature consists in the perfection of Reason and Understanding, than to neglect the use thereof, and choose and prefer the condition of Beasts. Men are vicious, and act like Beasts, because they are Wilful, Careless, Unreasonable, Incogitant, Inadvertent; not considering the Rules and Measures of Nature, and of Reason; For humane Nature is indued with rational self-reflecting Faculties; able to discern the essential differences of Good and Evil, and to observe what things conduce to its Happiness or Misery. It is most Natural and Easy for these faculties to embrace, and pursue those Objects, which are most agreeable to them. All sober Reason is for the ways and practice of Vertue. Vice is contrary to Nature, and to a Mans Interest; It is against the Reason of Mankind: And till a Man
 has

has forced himself, and miserably abused D.VIII.
his Nature, he will not consent unto it: and then we may except against that Mans Reason, or Judgment, because of his practice. For the *Philosopher* hath told us, that the wickedness of a Mans Life, and Practice, doth vitiate and marr the very Principles of his Mind: And we must never bring a Monster as an argument against what is Natural.

Be Instructed, that is, capable to receive. So 'tis in the *Hebrew*. Here God *Threatens* and menaces. It is Gods intention, and expectation that his Threatnings, Castigations and Menaces should Awaken sinners to consideration, put them upon Amendment. For *when* Gods Judgments are abroad in the Earth the *Inhabitants* of the world should learn *Righteousness*. It's expected that his Afflictions should work the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby, *Heb. 12. 11.* And the Prophet *Amos* the 4th, from the 6th to the last complains, that though they had been so and so corrected, yet they had not turned to the Lord. And the Prophet saith, *why should they be smitten any more, for they will revolt more and more. Isa. 1. 5.* We should take it for granted, all
O 2 that

Significat
Constrin-
gere, co-
hibere,
corrigen-
aliquem
Discipli-
na, Legi-
bus, vin-
culis, pœna

702

Vol. I. that is from God, toward us, in this state ; whether it be Declarations of his Will, or Denunciation of his Judgments, or significations of his displeasure, or Castigations inflicted, or his patient forbearance : They are all intended by God, as Teaching Piety, and instructions of Righteousness. God is not at all pleased with our sufferings, for what can sinners necessitated sufferings signify? Of what value is it for a Man to lye under those evils, which he cannot escape if he would, how insignificant is this? Nothing is morally Vertuous, but what is our choice. It is not at all pleasing to God, or satisfactory to him, to grieve the Children of Men. Yea, rather God looks upon it as a second evil, and himself as frustrated and disappointed in his endeavours to bring us to God, if we be not reformed, and instructed ; if we be not effectually amended. For *why should ye be smitten any more, ye will revolt more and more.* Isa. 1. 5. And *I will not punish your Daughters when they commit Whoredom.* Hos. 4. 14. He accounts it a farther Offence, and a new Provocation unto him, when Men are insensible or contumacious. In this case Men are in danger,

ger, either of greater Judgments, or to D.VIII.
be delivered up to *Reprobacy of mind*; 
the most desperate state. It was *Cain's*
temper to Complain, and not to Re-
pent. It is represented as the very case of
the damned, *Rev. 16. 9.* That they
blasphemed God because of their Plagues,
but Repented not to give Glory to him.
Joshua's counsel to *Achan* was that he
should *confess his sin, and give glory to*
God, *Jos. 7. 4.*

If we consider the Admonition in the
Text with the Context; we shall find
cause to take notice of the Mercy and
Patience of God in his unwillingness to
destroy. *v. 6.* *Thus saith the Lord of*
Hosts, hew ye down the Trees and cast a
Mount against Jerusalem, this is the City to
be visited. God had given the Enemies
commission to destroy them; here is
destruction as it were in Execution;
But here in the Text he seems to make a
stop, and suspend his displeasure, and
thus to Reason, *must it needs be so?* Is
there no remedy? may we not yet be
Reconciled? Is it not possible to bring
them to Repent? Though evil be de-
termined, tho' upon the Execution, yet
if they Repent, their Ruine may be pre-
vented. Wherefore as it is, *Amos 4. 12.*

Vol. I. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. God intimates thus much, I am placable, ready to lay aside my Displeasure; we may yet be reconciled, if thou wilt Return to a right understanding. This I observe from the Relation of the verse to the former.

But now to speak shortly to the next particulars, *what 'tis* to be instructed.

1. Search and examine, the number, weight and measure of thine iniquities, v. 7. *As a fountain casteth forth waters, so she casteth out her iniquities, violence and spoil is heard in her.*

2. Weigh and consider how Unjustifiable, how Unreasonable are provocations on our part, while there is Patience on Gods. Deut. 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people, and unwise.* Num. 14. 11. *How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be ere ye believe me, for all the signs that I have shewed among you?*

3. Understand and Discern: Have fix'd and staid apprehensions in your mind. Impressions of good things slip out of our minds, if they be not considered: Therefore David prays for the People, 1 Chron. 29. 18. *Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts*
of

of the hearts of thy people. There D.VIII.
are three Acts belonging to a Wise Man. ~~~~~

1. To have an Inspection into things present.

2. To have respect to things past, from which comes experience.

3. To Provide against future events, and prepare for things to come, even for the worst. *Be Instructed, Foresee, and Discern future Mischiefs following upon pertinacious continuance in sin: See the Issues of things in their own causes, and consequents in their antecedents.*

4. Do and perform, as becomes an Intelligent Agent, when he is made sensible and apprehensive. *Pro. 22. 3.*

The prudent Man foreseeth the evil and bideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished. Whatsoever was before,

was but preparatory to this, and incomplete without it, viz. *Examining,*

Considering and Understanding; we must

execute and perform and do accordingly,

things must be secured by future Acts;

things but half done, will quickly be undone;

for things run back again if not

settled by us into Action: We must not

give over till all be finished. Things

Incom-
pletum,
Imperfec-
tum con-
vertuntur
cum Nihilo. Nihil
est factum
dum rest-
at agen-
dum.

Vol. I. are not put in *ultimo* act, till there be a refinement of our Spirits, and a Reformation of our Lives: that is the End of all before. Things unperfected, go back again of their own accord. Nothing is settled, till it be in it's State. We must attain the Regenerate State, the Justified State; these are the Settlements and Foundations of Religion. None more deceive themselves, than they who think their Religion is true and genuine; tho' it Refines not their Spirits, and Reforms not their Lives. As by other principles, the Subjects of them are constituted in *Habitu*; so it is likewise in this case. Humility doth not only *denominate*, but *Affect*; so in *religiosis virtutibus*.

Now sinners, who are called Evil-doers and Workers of Iniquity, they fail in all these duties: for they are either Ignorant and Inapprehensive, or else Careless and Incogitant; or else vainly fraught and possess, or wilful and presumptuous.

1. Ignorant and Unapprehensive; Notwithstanding all the Means they have to attain Knowledge and Understanding: as never having been awakened:

and a man is no body where he hath D.VIII
 not thought and considered. For God
 and Nature brought us into this world
 with Powers and Faculties ; but Habits
 are acquired by consideration, and exer-
 cise, improving our Powers through
 Gods Assistance. The want of Princi-
 ples of Knowledge proves mischievous,
for without Knowledge the Heart is not
good : and God by the Prophet com-
 plains, *Hos. 4. 6. That his people perish*
for want of knowledge.

2. They are *Careless and Incogitant.*
 This is generally true of all those that
 Live in Sin, who are Neglective of God,
 and defective in the right Use of them-
 selves. This the Philosopher tells us,
Every one that sinneth is Ignorant ; that πιστις ἡ ἀ-
 is, he is either fundamentally ignorant, μαρτυρία
 as having been a person of no Educati- ἀγνοία.
 on, no Use and Improvement of his Arist.
 Natural powers and faculties ; or else
 he hath been Inadvertent, and Regard-
 less. And thus many Live as it were
without God in the world, forget God,
 not having their Senses exercised to per-
 ceive, and discern ; having no Affecti-
 on, nor Devotion towards Him ; have
 no Regard to their future Glory, nor to
 their Souls Immortality, do Good and
 Bad

Vol. I. Bad without difference or distinction :
 ~~~~~ Confound the sense of Good and Evil ;  
 they think not on the future Account,  
 nor upon Eternity. Thus did *David* ;  
 for he tells us, *Psal. 119. 59.* That he  
*considered his ways, and turned his feet*  
*unto Gods Testimonies.* The wicked, on  
 the contrary, are said to forget God,  
*Pf. 50. 22. Job 8. 13. They call not on*  
*his Name, Pf. 79. 6.* They Live but to  
 gratifie sense, pamper their flesh, and  
 feed the Beast, *Rom. 13. 14. They make*  
*provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts*  
*thereof.* They make it the Business and  
 Employment of their Mind and Under-  
 standing to Cater for the Body : Their  
 reasonable Souls only serve for Salt to  
 keep the Body from stench and putre-  
 faction.

3. *Vainly fraught,* and posselt, so as  
 to flatter themselves, deceive their own  
 Souls, put themselves into a fools Para-  
 dice, live in a Lye, go on blindfold to  
 destruction. Fancy and Humour, and  
 not the Reason and Truth of things  
 Rule in their Lives. Or else,

4. They are *Wilful and Desperate,*  
 casting off all obligation to God, and  
*hold the Truth in unrighteousness ; make*  
*havock of Conscience ; turn the Grace*  
 of

of God into Wantonness, and contract Re-  
probacy of Mind, and say with them, **D. VIII.**

1 Cor. 15. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we must dye. Come say they, fetch Wine, and we will fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.* Isa. 56. 12.

Thus have you had an Account of the Caution and Admonition : be Instructed.

II. Now for the Inforcement. *Lest my Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a Land not Inhabited.*

*Lest my Soul depart from thee ;* these words are a Metaphor taken from a Member put out of Joynt, that cannot be set again ; it is of the same import with that we read, Ezek. 23. 18. *So she discovered her whoredoms, and my mind was alienated from her : and Heb. 10. 38. my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* The meaning of God in all such expressions is that we should Return unto Him ; therefore here observe, how hardly doth God forget his Relation to his People ? how doth he inforce his arguments ? He gives Admonition ; and how doth he enforce and back it, that they may take notice Gods meaning is, they should return to him, because of his

Vol. I. his forwardness to Admonish ? In these words you have a double argument.

Meliores  
ducit A-  
mor. Plu-  
res cogit  
Timor.

*Argumentum Amoris &*

*Argumentum Timoris.*

1. An Argument of *Love and good will*, lest my Soul depart from thee.

2. An Argument from *Fear*, lest I make thee desolate. A double argument is as a double Testimony, by which every word is established, 2 Cor. 13. 1. Here is an obligation upon Ingenuity: And the constraints of necessity. This double argument shews us two things

1. The *Stupidity and Senselessness* of those, who are made to the Perfection of Reason and Understanding, and yet act contrary to it.

2. The *Impiety and Unrighteousness* of Sinners, who are a real offence to God, cause his Displeasure, and bring upon Persons and Places, Ruine and Destruction. For can any one imagine that it is a matter of nothing, that Man, who is endued with Mind and Understanding, and so made capable of God, to live in a constant Neglect of God, and Abuse of those principles, whereby he is capable to serve God ?

2. Since



Since all the ways of God are ways of Righteousness, Judgment and Truth, in whom there is fulness of Power and Liberty ; yet cannot by Power, pervert that which is Right : Is it to be endured by the Governour of the World, that a limited Creature, of bounden duties should extend Liberty to the confounding of Order, and Right, and all difference between Good and Evil : That he should take Liberty to the introducing of all Confusion, and Disorder in the Family of God ( for the whole World is his family ) and live in the Violation of all the Laws of Righteousness, Goodness and Truth, which are the Laws of Heaven. Let us think impartially ; and Judge righteous Judgment.

Now because some think that Sin is a Trifle, and wonder that God should think himself concerned, to restrain, and limit his Creatures, in what they have a mind to do ; that God should refuse to let them enjoy that Liberty ; that God should deny his Creatures Satisfaction. I shall therefore shew that those things which we call *Sinful*, have an intrinsic Malignity in them ; and therefore are forbidden by God, because of their Naughtiness.

And

And for further security to us, against such Poyson; God (out of his care for us) hath super-added the Use of his *own Authority* over us, and *our Interest* (which in all reason ought to prevail with us) that we should not do our selves that Mischiefe; that we should not meddle with what is so Hurtful and Dangerous.

This may be said concerning the Liberty, that by our Saviour we are brought into; *That in the state of the Gospel, I know nothing forbidden, which one of true Reason would desire to have Liberty to do.* There is intrinsic Rancour, Venom, and Malignity in every sin, though in several degrees: And this I will shew in four particulars.

• *Apoſt.*  
• *est forma-*  
• *lis ratio*  
• *peccati.*

1. Sin is a *Variation from the Law and Rule of Gods Creation*: It is contrary to the order of Reason: and when I say this, I say as bad as can be spoken. Every sin is against the order of Reason, against the Law and Rule of Gods Creation: and it is unnatural to the state of a Creature. What other Creature in Nature doth vary from the state of its Creation, but Man? who ought to be most Regular, Constant and Uniform. If the rest of the Creatures should

do

do so, the World would soon be turned into a Chaos, and confusion. If the Sea should do so, it would soon overflow all its banks. If the Sun should give no more Light, but be the cause of stench and putrefaction; that instead of the splendid Rays, which he casts upon the World, and revives those things by which are below, it should send forth noisom vapours: how would the Universe be unturnished and disordered? The like may be said of all other Creatures, which if they should act as irregularly, and unnaturally as Man, every thing would be brought into Disorder and Confusion, and the World turned into a Chaos. What is it in Humane Nature to do contrary to the Order of Reason, and Law of Heaven? It is a phrase Characteristical of Venom and Malignity; to which there can be no comparison.

2. In Sin there is open and manifest Neglect of God, to whom all Reverence and Regard is most due. For whosoever converts himself inordinately to the Creature; averts himself from God; and then, what becomes of our due Acknowledgments to God, and thankfulness? than which nothing in the world

A creature is bound plane & plene deo subesse.

is



Vol. I. is more reasonable. *For the Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib, Isa. 1. 3.*

3. By Sin there is a *Disturbance in Gods Family*: (as the whole World is.) It is an interruption of that Intercourse and Communication there ought to be amongst creatures; *for every sinner destroys much Good.* Where-ever there is irregular Motions, Agents will interfere; and hence arise Exasperations, Contradiction and Offence. Were Mankind Regular in their Motions, and confined themselves to warrantable actions; there would be nothing of Displeasure, Passion, Provocation or Offence found among men.

4. By the practice of Iniquity we *marr our Spirits*, spoil our Tempers, and acquire unnatural principles, and dispositions. By Sin, we part with the Modesty and Ingenuity of our Natures. Now therefore let the Atheistical and Profane person be aggrieved if he can, or find fault with God, that He should cut him short, and prohibit him all Irregular and Exorbitant actions: Since they are so contrary to Humane Nature, and such a Disturbance in Gods Government. And since there is nothing

in Inferiour Nature, but what is Regular and constant from the first moment of its Creation, to this hour. There is Turpitude in every act of Sin; yet Sins differ: for there are several Degrees of Sin; for sins are Aggravated or Abated, by the Disposition, Capacities, and Principles of the Agent that commits them. As

1. If there be *Clear Light*, and fullness of *Liberty*: then it is sin with a high hand.

2. If sin be committed in *Doubtfulness* and Uncertainty, then it weakens and Disables Conscience. Great regard is to be had to the Innocence, and Tenderness of our own mind. The wise man in *Ecclesiasticus* saith, Thou hast no friend in all the world so near to thee as the Reason of thy own mind: therefore never treat the Reason of thy Mind unhandsomely. Treat kindly thy home reprover; there is no friend truer to thee, nor can do thee better service; therefore hear its voice, and give it Satisfaction.

3. If Men sin through *Confusion of thoughts*, then it may be said we were not our selves. One may say we were

Vol. I. but half our selves, when we did it

4. If we sin by *Misapprehension* or mistake ; then we did not intend *that*, but *another* thing when we did it.

5. If we did it by an *Affault*, or sudden surprizal, then it was as well anothers fault as ours.

6. If upon *Provocation*, heat of Passion ; and we Revoke: it as soon as we return to our selves by this we make it Morally void and null : For you do revoke and morally undo, that which you repent of.

7. If men sin by some *Carelesness*, Negligence, and Indiligence ; if we Re-compence it by after care, and diligence, upon this costly experience : This also helps to excuse.

I conclude with Two words of Admonition to Two sorts of Persons.

1. To the *Atheistical*, and prophane, I earnestly recommend to them the Re-examining of things : And if they do not pretend to Intallibility, I beg of them to consider their former Thoughts and Resolutions. Think again whether the Great Things of Religion may not be Realities ? viz. The being of a God, the Immortality



lity of the Soul, the essential Difference of Good and Evil; and future Rewards and Punishments. At least do not Practice against the sense of these things; but Return, and use thy Reason; which if not vitiated and prepossessed, will satisfy the *Native sense* of the mind. To say nothing now of Scripture (which speaks enough of Assurance of what it declares; so that they which read it, will not easily shut their hands of it, if they intend to be wicked;) Reason hath so much to say for these great things, that the Obstinate are put upon it, to Blind and blot out those Reasons and Arguments, which they know not what to say to, nor how to answer; which stick as so many goads in their sides. No man but he, who is habitually evil, and hath Dethroned his Reason, and Confederated with the enemy of his mind, can satisfy himself, that there is no Reason to satisfy him to Fear these great things, viz. the Being of a God, the Immortality and Eternity of the Soul, and future Punishments. If then these things be Real, have not sinners run a wild course? I will only tell them,

*Lex nobiscum nata, & lex simplici-ter a deo data.*

Vol. I.

1. That many, who have as madly resolved, have before their deaths found cause to alter their Judgments in these matters, and thought it their safest way to Deprecate their Offence.

2. However, they make shift to stifle the voice of Conscience at present, and go on to sin; some others, who have sometime done the like, have never had any true Enjoyment of themselves after such wounds made in their Conscience, and breach of their peace; but either fell into Confusion of thought and perplexity of mind, or Distraction, and have been sometimes their own Executioners, and have made an end of themselves: rather than endure the reproofs of their Consciences, have rid themselves out of the world.

3. Those that are of raised Intellectuals, of Refined Morals, of sober Reason, would not have upon them the Guilt of some mens sins (how ever they may escape Judgment in this world) for all the Titles, Powers and Revenues which such men enjoy in the world. It will only give such Reason to know, that notwithstanding their

their own Incompetent Judgment concerning themselves, that is true even of them, which is said by Samuel concerning the wicked Sons of Eli, *They have made themselves vile*, and contemptible. So are these Profane and Atheistical persons, they are Base in the sight of God, and in the sight of wise men : for wickedness doth Disrobe any man of his Excellency, and makes him vile and contemptible.

*Secondly*, To persons engaged in ways of Religion. If these be Real and sincere in their profession, they are in a state of Reconciliation with God ; and if in a state of Reconciliation with Him, then let them be true to the Terms of Friendship, and not do acts of Enemies in the state of Friendship. *Let them that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Where God speaks peace to his people, let them not return again to folly, Ps. 85. 8.* To the Fear of God in Scripture, is always adjoyned the Eschuing of Evil ; and this is the Character God gives of an Upright man, *Job 1. 12.* It is essential to Religion to walk according to the difference of Good and Evil. There are other things which have the use and consideration of the Means in Religion,



**Vol.** **W** **l**igion, which I call the Instrumental  
 part of Religion: But Religion it self  
 doth Issue in Holiness, Uprightness,  
 Integrity, and Separation from Iniqui-  
 ty.

**DIS**

## DISCOLINS E. IV.

in GOD.

THE END OF THE WORLD

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## DISCOURSE IX.

### *The Danger of Unfaithfulness to GOD.*

HEB. iii. 12.

*Take heed, Brethren, lest there be  
in any of you an evil heart of  
Unbelief in departing from the  
Living God.*

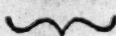
**R**ELIGION is highly concerned in Two Dis. IX.  
Things; the Judgment of Truth,  
and the Conscience of Right: and he  
doth substantially fail upon account of  
Religion, that is wanting in either of  
these.

I shall now consider the Reasons of  
this Caution in the Text, *Take heed,  
Brethren, &c.* We are highly concerned  
to be cautious and wary upon a four  
fold account.

Q.

1. From

## Vol. I.



1. From those things that are *within* us.

2. From things that are *about* us.

3. From the great *Consequence* and *Importance* that Truth and Goodness hath unto our Souls.

4. From not a *Possibility* only but a *Probability* of failing, and miscarrying, if Care be not taken: and the greatness of the Evil if we do fall short.

I. We had need to be Wary because of those things that are *within* us. For if once we consent to Iniquity, and acquaint our selves with Evil; we put our selves out of an indifferency to Good and Evil, and so marr the Ingenuity and Modesty of our Natures. For one Evil Act doth beget an Indisposition to the contrary Virtue: Men become less competent to judge, or to do what is Right; when once they have miscarried. We do not know what wrong we do our selves, when we do an Act contrary to Right: for by this means we come to pass into the opposite Nature. The Apostle doth exhort Christians, Heb. 2. 1. *That they should take heed to the things that they had learned; lest they let them slip, and become like leaking Vessels.* Good Apprehensions do not always stay with

Transiisse in  
oppositam  
Speciem.  
Elicuisse  
contrarium  
Actum.  
μή ποτε  
παράπυ-  
ω.

with us; and contrary ones are in a Succession. This we find by Experience, that we do ebb and flow, rise and fall, go backward and forward, up and down, here and there, on and off, do and undo. Sometimes we see, and believe, understand and resolve, and then again, we grow insensible of these good Impressions that were upon us. And therefore *David* being well acquainted with the frail and uncertain Condition of Man, prays thus unto God, *Keep it in the Imaginations of the Thoughts of the Heart of thy People.* 1 Chron. 29. 18.

Also we are inclined and solicited from our *lower and worse part*; from the Delights of our Senses, which many times prove strong Temptations to us. And Lastly, we are often befooled by our own Fancies and Imaginations. He is a Wise Man who is not his own Fool. Our Sense of our selves is more Incompetent, than our Judgment of Others. We are so much given up to Self-flattery, that in favour of our selves, we conceit that of our selves that we do not find, and are apt to think that of our selves, that no body that knows us do believe; and all this from *within*. Nec te quæ-  
siveris ex-  
tra. Τὸ ἐν  
σεαυτῷ.



Vol. I. 2. And then from *without* us. How many things do impose upon us from our Easiness and Credulity; so that we walk as it were in a vain Shew, and this occasioned both from *Objects* and *Agents*. The Guise of the World, the Manners and Humours of Men, these are supposed to be indubitable and unquestionable: And these prove a mighty Temptation to us, when we look about us and see Men so solicitous, and over-busy, designing, undertaking, and engaging about the things of this Life, as if a Man's Happiness were altogether to be had here; and as if our present Actions had no reference to Eternity. And then *Satan*, he is a lying Spirit in the Mouths of all his false Prophets: He is an Abettor and Encourager of Evil; being a Liar from the beginning, and one that goeth about seeking whom he may devour. And then *Men* are deceitful and uncertain; and use their Wits and Parts, to circumvent and over-reach one another. Fair Representations of things are made, when their real Existence is otherwise; so that we are many times deluded and deceived; and this is our weakness; we love to have it so; we would

1 Cor. 7.

31. ἡμᾶς  
τὸ κόσμον.

1. John 2.

16. ἐπι-  
θυμία τ'  
σαρκός.

would have Men speak according to our Dis. IX. Sense, and not according to the Reality of things. Thus it often happens, that they are grievous unto others, that do not speak according to their Sense. We read of *Abab* that he hated *Micaiah*, because he did not speak according to his Sense, and as he would have him. And so *S. Paul* saith, that he was their Enemy because he told them the Truth. 1 King. 22.  
8.  
Gal. 4. 16.

3. Then also the Consequence of Truth and real Vertue to our selves. For, it is the proper employment of our Intellectual Faculties, to be conversant about God; to make enquiry after Him, and to find Him out in all his Ways and Works; to conceive aright of Him, and then to resemble and imitate Him. Religion is an Obligation upon us to God. The first motion of Religion is to understand what is True of God; and the second is, to express it in our Lives, and to copy it out in our Works: the former is our Wisdom, and the latter is our Goodness. In these two consists the Health and Placidity of our Minds: for Health to the Body is not more than Vertue is unto the Mind. A depraved, vitious Mind is as really the Sickness and

Vol. I. Deformity thereof, as any foul and loathsome Disease is unto the Body. And as really as these tend to the Death and Dissolution of the Body; so the Vices of the Mind tend to the Separation of God and the Soul. If therefore it be our Care to rid our selves of Bodily Diseases; much more it becomes us to look after the Cure of our Souls.

4. And Lastly, the *Danger* if we do not take Care; for in this state of Probation, Exercise and Tryal, there are many things that are matter of Temptation to us, and are intended for the exercise of our Vertue: and in the course of Providence God permits them, partly to awaken us to Diligence and Consideration; and partly to make us to betake our selves to Him for Protection, Guidance, and Direction. And then Gain or Loss is according as we approve our selves unto Him.

This we may observe, that there are no effects in the course of Nature, but the Author of Nature hath secured them by vigorous and effectual Causes. And assure your selves, God is not more wanting to the higher Order of his Creatures: but hath taken care to secure the Intellectual World; that part which

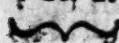


is invested with Reason and Understanding, with Liberty and Freedom, and therein doth more partake of Him; and He hath secured the effects of these Agents, by exerting vigorous and effectual Causes. And what are they but the exercise of Reason and Vertue; together with divine Assistance, Guidance and Direction? For when God made a Spirit finite and fallible; He did intend to direct, guide and govern it, by a Spirit infinite and infallible. And if any one of us find it not so; I dare say, such a person hath neglected and forsaken God first, or else God would not have forsaken him. For this we take for granted, That God in the first Creation of Man, did intend to govern his Mind by the assistance of the divine Spirit; and that there should never have been a Spirit finite and fallible; if it should not have had Relation to, and Communication from the divine Spirit.

From what hath been said I shall make Two Inferences.

I. Then you see we may not be Careless, Self-Neglective or Incogitant. Some Men live so carelessly, and upon such easie terms in the World; as if there were no Danger nor any thing before

Vol. I.



them to Gain or Lose; even as if they had nothing to do, and like *Solomon's* Sluggard, their Field is overgrown with Briars and Thorns. But we are greatly concerned, in this state; and there is apparent hazard and danger of Miscarriage; For there is some Difficulty in what is to be done, and this Difficulty encreaseth the longer we neglect our Duty; and it multiplies, by how much the more we have abused our selves. For, *A Man hath himself as he useth himself.* If a Man hath alienated himself from God, by consenting to known Iniquity, it is the great Mercy of God, if ever he be restored: and when it is done it must be by Repentance and Renovation. The first work of Religion is to judge and perceive; and this is a work of Skill; and therefore for us to be unawakened and careless, not to employ our highest Faculties in this work, is irrational and unaccountable, unworthy of an intelligent Agent. In worldly Affairs that are of any moment, we judge a Person highly culpable that doth not use his Reason and Judgment. If a Man miscarry for want of this, we can hardly pity a Man in so shameful a case; we hardly think him an Object of Charity

city that will not work for his Living; **Dis. IX.**  
and do not that which in him is, to  
make provision for himself. For a Man  
that is endued with Reason and Under-  
standing, to say *I did not think*, I ne-  
ver took the matter into Consideration;  
is no other than the account of a Fool.  
Really I wonder how any Man can sa-  
tisfie himself, to think that he is reli-  
gious in any degree; and yet take no  
care to inform himself in necessary  
Truth; who doth not make it his Busi-  
ness, to set up a Throne of Judgment  
in his own Soul. For, if he stick here,  
he cannot go any farther. For if he  
hath any thing that he calls Religion,  
it is but Superstition, and blind Devo-  
tion. But this, though it be what is  
*First* in Religion, yet it is not *All* a  
Man hath to do; For, when a Man  
hath established a Throne of Judgment  
in his own Soul, and is able to put a  
Difference between Good and Evil,  
Right and Wrong; then Secondly, he  
must reform himself according to such  
Knowledge, and always hold himself  
to that, which his Judgment tells him  
is the Good and Right. These two  
things, I declare to you, are solid and  
substantial in Religion; necessary and  
indif-



Vol. I. indispenfible, and a Man doth but be-  
fool himfelf, to account himfelf Reli-  
gious, if he fail in either of thefe: If  
he fail in the Judgment of Right and  
Wrong; and if after his Judgment he  
doth not answerably reform himfelf in  
his Life and Actions: Such a Man's Re-  
ligion is fo cheap, that, as it coft him  
nothing, fo it is worth nothing. A  
Man may pick and gather *his* Religion  
in the Wildernefs of the World: Such  
a Man may be born among the Hea-  
then and converse with Beasts, and  
never look after himfelf, and yet be  
Religious upon fuch an account. If  
therefore you have Souls to fave, and  
bear true refpect to God, be fure you  
take care for right Information, and then  
be fure to refine and reform your Spi-  
rits, and your Lives, according to your  
Judgments. For, if after this, a Man  
fhould fail in particular Practice; he  
will be Self-condemned; upon which  
doth follow the Worm of Confcience,  
and that Fire which goeth not out.  
It is a vain thing for a Man to call that  
an action of Religion, which is not  
an Act of the Underftanding: for that  
is not a Religious Act, which is not  
Humane. For we all fay, that which  
doth

doth not proceed from the Judgment Dif. IX. of the Mind, and Choice of the Will, is not an *Human Act* though the Act of a Man. And if it doth not arise to the degree of an *Human Act*, I am sure it cannot be a *Religious Act*. It is therefore indispensibly necessary to Religion, that every Man, according to his Capacity, Condition, and Opportunity, take care to inform his Understanding, that so he may have the Judgment of Truth: and after this, to comply with his Judgment in Practice.

2. I infer from what hath been said, that we are not altogether to *Refer our selves to others*, but to employ our own Faculties, and improve our own Advantages, and Opportunities, and to see with our own Eyes. For, otherwise we do not answer our *Make*. For without this, a Man grows to be less; and goes backward the longer he lives, and the older he grows; unless he improves his Rational Faculties, which is the proper Perfection of Intellectual Nature. We ought to look upon this *Judgment of Truth*, and Discerning, not only by way of Privilege, and as a Security against Forgery, Superstition

Vol. I.  perstition and Slavery; but also as a Charge and Duty. It is incumbent upon us to look after Information, in order to Reformation, and Amendment: because without Knowledge the Heart cannot be Good. But then, the Heart is not Sanctified from Knowledge alone; for there must be first Knowledge, and then Vertue. I dare assure you, no Man can be Religious by another Man's Knowledge; nor any thing of others: No more than a Man that is Sick, can be well by his Neighbour's Health. In matters of this nature, 'tis every body for himself. For these Perfections of the Mind, Vertue and Goodness, are not communicable, as other things are: they do not pass as Estates, and Money, and the like; but they pass by Mental Illumination, by proposing each to other, and by the Receivers Consideration, and his own imbibing of that which is offered.

But here now I come to the case of *Implicit Faith*, so much applauded in the Church of *Rome*. I will tell you in few Words, the state of *Implicit Faith*. In some cases I think it may, and ought to be allowed; but in others not. As,



1. I do express an *Implicit Faith* in Dis. IX. God, in those things, that God hath not revealed so plainly and fully: for in these things, though the Scripture declare them in some form of Words; yet I cannot reach the Sense that is contained in them. Suppose there be a place of Scripture about some notion, that doth transcend the reach of Human Reason, and which is knowable only by Divine Revelation: and Divine Revelation is comprehended in a form of Words, that I cannot fully understand: in this case, I refer my self to God, and believe that that is True which God Intended in those Words. This I call an *Implicit Faith* in God.

2. There are some cases, in which God hath revealed Himself so far, and no farther: here I know no more than God hath revealed; and it is *learned Ignorance* to know no more than God doth say. And an *Implicit Faith* in these two Senses is the Resignation of a Man's Understanding to God; and a great Expression of our Obedience to Him. For we should be as willing to be ignorant where God hath not declared; as we should be ready and forward to know and understand all, that he

*Docta Ignorantia.*

Vol. I. he hath revealed. In this Sense, therefore I applaud and allow an Implicit Faith: and I think they have been busy and created a great deal of Disturbance in the Church of God that have been over Industrious to make out the Revelation of God, beyond what God hath said, or that will impose upon others, their own Sense. But such an Implicit Faith as I have declared, I do allow: for it is becoming, in respect of God; and it doth shew us to be Modest and Teachable; and that we do not make Religion for our selves, but receive our Religion from God.

*Necessitas  
est lex im-  
paris.*

*Oportet dis-  
centem cre-  
dere; sed  
hic non decet  
immorari.*

3. Then again. Another account of Implicit Faith is this, which is virtuous and highly commendable, being the *Necessity of the case*, viz. That every one do rest in his Teacher a while. Persons that are at present without Instruction, or the Advantage of Education, must believe those that have these Advantages: As those that are without Learning, must believe Scholars, for the Translation of the Bible: and this Implicit Faith is not to be blamed, but is the necessity of the Case, and cannot be avoided: For the Truth is, every Man as a *Learner* must believe, and

and give credit to his Teacher, but yet *Dis. IX.*  
let him not depend upon his Teacher   
more than needs must, nor no longer  
than need require: For you ought not  
to think that you must be in the state  
of a Learner all the days of your Life.  
A Child must believe what is told him  
at first, that this Letter is so called,  
and that two Letters put together spell  
so much; but after a while, he comes  
to see the Reason thereof as well as  
his Teacher; and will not be content  
always to be in the state of a Child;  
but will, as he ought, use the Privi-  
lege of his Nature, and the Judgment  
of Discerning, and see with his own  
Eyes. And I must tell you, he is a ve-  
ry unhappy Man, that hath lived twen-  
ty, thirty, or forty Years in the World,  
and hath never done that which is the  
peculiar and proper Action of Human  
Nature, that is, to use Reason, Under-  
standing and Judgment; but lived all  
the days of his Life, like a meer Ani-  
mal, and below his kind; having not  
put forth any of those Acts which do  
most properly belong unto him, as a  
Rational Being.

We condemn Credulity in the Ro-  
mish Church, as we have good Rea-  
son



Vol. I. son to do: But I must tell you, that  
~~~~~ absolute Reference of a Man's self to  
others, is the very self same thing in
the Protestant Religion; and those Men
(whatever they profess) are but *Papists*
in it; neither can such Persons approve
themselves, to be invested with Reason
and Understanding; for they have not
put forth any of those Acts of Judg-
ment and distinguishing, which belong
to Reason; which is the Height and
Excellency of Human Nature; they have
not acted as Intelligent Agents; but
have sunk down into the Animal Life.
I confess it is our necessity, for some
part of our Lives, to believe and give
credit; but when we are instructed,
we must awaken our own Faculties;
search, consider, examine, weigh and
resolve with our selves; that it is so
upon the Evidence of Light and Rea-
son; that the thing it self speaks. We
must not live and dye in this state,
where there is not a Judgment of dis-
cerning: For in this state, both Mens
Minds and Consciences are defiled. How
unsatisfactory would it be to a Man,
were he not in a Spiritual Lethargy;
to be unacquainted with the true Prin-
ciples of Life; and that he should take
this

this to be good and that to be Evil, Dis. IX.
 only because he is told so. In all o-
 ther matters wherein Men are concern-
 ed about the things of this Life, they
 would not have Patience, to sit down
 satisfied without making due Search and
 Enquiry: but matters of Religion are of
 the greatest Importance to us; and
 therefore, here is our special Employ-
 ment, and herein we ought to shew our
 greatest Care and Diligence. These are
 things of greatest Weight, and Moment;
 and there is nothing to be alledged to
 the contrary. And really, we do in
 Substance, agree with the Papists, that
 do usurp and impose upon us; and we
 justify their practise: They call Men to
 blind Obedience; and we practise it if
 we do not according to our Ability, and
 Parts, set up within us a Throne of
 Judgment, by vertue of which, we Re-
 fine our Spirits, and Reform our Lives.
 This would make a good Man; and if
 he should happen to mistake, this would
 yet preserve him: for that which doth
 proceed from Judgment of Truth, as
 the Person doth think and suppose;
 though there be a mistake; the vice of
 the Mind is abated, and the Man will
 rather be pitied, and compassionated;
 Re than

Vol. I. than condemned. He doth act, because it is his Judgment, because he hath examined, and finds cause so to think, after he hath heard, learnt, prayed and considered. If after all this, the Man is mistaken at last, he is pardonable, and his Case compassionate. But if he hath a private Judgment, and hath not used due care for better Information; he is Inexcusable: and if he be not Reformed according to his Judgment, then he is Self-condemned.

This is a point of great weight, and it lyes at the Foundation of Religion. But alas! alas! I lose my labour as to the greatest part of the World. For though Liberty of Judgment be every ones Right, yet how few are there, that make use of this Right? For the use of this Right, doth depend upon Self-improvement by Meditation, Consideration, Examination, Prayer, and the like. These are things antecedent, and pre-requisite: for a Man doth not leap into a Judgment; he is born only with Faculties, but these cannot immediately produce these Acts. for it is not in the Intellectual World, as in the World Natural: for there doth the Sun no sooner appear, but there is Light from the East

East to the West: And if the Wind blow, it blows we know not how far. But in the Intellectual World, a Man is born only with Faculties, Powers, and Principles: but all Habits are acquired, and Men attain them by particular Acts. No Man is born with Habits, but every Man hath himself, as he useth himself: And he that hath never considered, weighed, and searched; he knows but little upon this account. Hence it is, that a great many Persons are in an Incapacity (however they may flatter themselves) concerning acts of Judgment. For that Man's Judgment is not worth a rush, in any case whatsoever; that hath not examined, often thought upon, and enquired into things. Men should consider, and make it their Business to be informed in the difference of things, and make due Application to God to teach their Understandings knowledge; or else, 'tis not to be expected that they should arrive at a true and right Judgment. Therefore I do resolve it much safer of the two, for one that is Blind, or is not at leisure to weigh and consider, and so to receive Instruction, to choose a Wise and Good Person to follow, and to make him his Guide;

Vol. I. than to attempt to go alone. For he was born only to a possibility; because of his natural parts: but Faculties you must put no confidence in, unless they be qualified and seconded by Habits; and no Habits are, if not acquired; and acquisition is by mental, rational and spiritual Improvement.

None so Miscarry, as the presumptuous beyond their own sufficiency; they who assume to themselves where they are not prepared, and qualified. Such as are sober, and modest, know much better than others: and yet they are loath to speak, fearful of being mistaken. But others there are, that are Blind and Unawakened, ever since they came into the World; and yet they are confident, Arrogant, Presumptuous, and Self-sufficient. The modest Man will not venture beyond his own Strength; he is very receptive of all Direction; glad of Information; but the presumptuous Man though Blind, he is bold, and confident; because he is most Ignorant. So that you see this Argument of private Judgment is Modest and Humble; and grows only in God's Garden. And this is the Privilege of humane Nature; yea Incumbent upon us All: and we ought so

to employ our selves, that we may arrive to a perfection of Judgment; and consequently upon Judgment, to a right Frame and Temper of Mind. Dis. IX.

Now all this I have Discoursed upon this Argument of Judgment of Truth, and Conscience of Right; which are things that have great place in Religion; and wherein if we will have any foundation for our Profession, and denominate our selves Christians, from true and solid Grounds; we must charge our selves with these things; and put our selves into a capacity of discerning the difference of things, and form our selves according to that Judgment.

to employ our selves, that we may arrive to a perfection of Judgment; and consequently upon Judgment, to a right Frame and Temper of Mind.

Now all this I have Discouraged upon this Argument of Judgment of Truth and Consistence of Right; which are things that have great place in Religion; and wherein if we will have any foundation for our Profession, and denominate our selves Christians from true and solid Grounds; we must charge our selves with these things; and put our selves into a capacity of discerning the difference of things, and form our selves according to that Judgment.

DISCOURSE X.

The Malignity of Popery.

JAMES iii. 18.

*The fruit of Righteousness is sown
in Peace, of them that make Peace.*

I Have propos'd to make use of these words as a Character, a Criterion, a Note or Mark of difference and distinction: And that not only of Persons in their single capacities, but chiefly of Churches. For we find the great enquiry of Christendom is, *which is the true Church.* The *Romish* they pretend that they are it: and they will tell us, that there is no other; and that there is no Salvation out of their Church. A very great Assuming, and Taking upon themselves. I would not run into other Arguments, but let us judg by this Temper recom-

Vol. I. mended in the Text, *which is likely to be the true Church.* If they do make use of the Name and Credit of Religion for Inhumane and cruel Practises, then this Character doth not belong to them. Let us try by that: And,

In the first place they own it, That they may Propagate Religion with Fire and Sword. And by wotul experience, it hath been found, that that which hath been done under that Title of extirpating Heretical Pravity, of which they take to themselves the Cognisance and Judgment, hath proved the most fiery, and incendiary Principle that ever was in the World. Farther, They do not account themselves bound to keep Faith and Truth with Hereticks. They say that by Heresy, Men lose all their right to Truth. Whereas we know that keeping our word is the Foundation of all converse, For what is one Man to another, more than his word? If Men be not true to their word and promise, by which Men are sure of Persons, and Things; all converse is to little purpose, if not for the Worse.

Farther, they *Sanctify*, by their Notion of Religion, Treachery, Falshood and Perfidiousness, Murther, Massacre, bloody
and

and cruel practises: and all this, to extirpate Heresy, (as they call it,) to plant Religion, and bring Men into their Church. But how this agrees with the Character given of Religion in the Text, and the intent and purpose of it, let any Man judge. Verily, by what these Men Say, and Do, one would think, that Hell it self were broken loose, and come up into the World. So unlike it is to *New Jerusalem* that shall come down from above. Yet this is that Religion which they practise, and which they own in their Principles. And because I am upon a material point, I will give you a few *Instances*, by which it will appear, that what I have said is True. *Henry the 3d King of France* was basely murdered by *Clement*. *Henry the 4th* by *Ravillac*. And see how these Practises took among them. *Pope Pius the 5th* that was then alive, applauded the fact of *Clement*, and reckons it as glorious a work, as God's sending the Messiah into the World, or Raising him from the dead: That a Religious Person should do such an Act, for the Interest, Service, and Advantage of the Church: Because it was done in the Defence of the Holy League, which

was

Vob. II. I was indeed nothing but Rebellion and Irreligion.

John Hus, and *Jerom of Prague* were burnt for Hereticks notwithstanding the *Safe Conduct* that was promised them. But they did all agree, that the Emperor could not give *Safe Conduct* to such Hereticks, and that no Faith ought to be kept with them. In this Case, we may use the words of good old *Jacob*, Gen. 49. 6. *Simon and Levi are Brethren, Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation. O my Soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel, &c.* In Matters of Good and Evil, Men ought to be governed by the Reason of Things, or by plain and express Texts of Scripture. But these Men do teach us, as *Gideon* was said to teach the Men of *Succoth*: Judg. 8. 16. *With Thorns, and Briars of the wilderness: with these he taught the men of Succoth.* Or as *Joab* did 2 Sam. 12. 31. He brought forth the People that were taken, and put them under Saws, and under Harrows of Iron, and under Axes of Iron, and made them pass through the Brick-Kiln, &c. These are the Men that fulfil

what is written by the Author to the Disc. X. Hebrews Chap. 11. of Men of their Spirit and Temper, that used those Men of whom the World was not Worthy, after this manner: *Some were stoned, others were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slayn with the sword, and made to wander about in Sheep-skins, and Goats-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.* These Men of whom the World was not worthy, had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea of bands and imprisonments. All these things are verified of those, that have been persecuted by the Roman Church: the *Albigenses*, and the *Waldenses*; of whom multitudes were murdered for their Consciencs toward God.

I might also Instance in their manner of converting the *Indians* and *Natives*; and tell you such lamentable stories, that would even pierce the Heart of any Man to hear them. But to come near home; their Massacre of *Paris* accompanied with such cruelty and barbarity, as words can hardly express. Never was it known in the World, that Men should all on a suddain, rise up against their Neighbours among whom they lived in peace; and without any provocation,

or

Vol. I. or wrong *done* to them, to rise up and destroy so many thousands, upon the score of Religion, and conscience; as they did here, and in Ireland. The Relation of both which is extant.

But lastly, their design all a long and continued practise among us, in the Days of *Queen Mary*, and *Elizabeth*. In the former of whose Reign, who is ignorant of the havock they made upon good and innocent Men, haling them not only to Prisons, but to the Stake, because they could not Worship a piece of Bread, for God? And what they are now a doing God only knows; though in some measure, their Intentions have been discovered by their Actions. Alas! what have these Men to do with our Faith in God? Is it any wrong to them, that we have Faith in God according as we find cause to believe? Is it not enough that we do approve our Consciences to God, and to receive from God what he hath spoken? Is all this to no purpose, unless we will comply with their Novel Creeds, none of which were known in the Days of the Apostles, nor for several hundreds of Years after? I say, what just cause of provocation do the Reformed Religion give

give to these Popish Spirits: That be- Disc. X.
 cause Protestants cannot believe as the
 Popish Church doth, but are guided by
 Reason and Scripture; the most Sacred
 Things in the World; the one being
 the Light of God's Creation, and the o-
 ther the Revelation and result of his
 Will: Because we cannot practise contra-
 ry to these, nor otherwise than our
 Judgments and Consciences allow of;
 therefore are we used as they in *Daniel*
 by *Nebuchadnezzar*, thrown into the fiery
 furnace, and persecuted with Plunders,
 Massacres, and what the malice of these
 Men can invent. Is this any Religious
 Motion think you? which always
 ought to be in obedience to God, and ac-
 cording to knowledge. If this be a hea-
 vy charge, I appeal to Those that know
 them best, whether I charge them with
 any thing that is not apparently True.

But let us for a while Reason with
 these Men, concerning these Principles,
 and Practises. And I ask them soberly,
 is *this* like the Religion of him that came
 to seek and to save that which was lost,
 and that prayed for his murtherers, *Fa-
 ther forgive them, they know not what
 they do?* And *St. Stephen* the first Mar-
 tyr, he wrote after his copy, *Lord, lay
 not*

Vol. I. *not this Sin to their charge.* Is this the Religion of him who rebuked his Disciples for calling for Fire from Heaven, to destroy them that did not follow them? They did not think of Making a Fire to do it; but they flew to Heaven for vengeance: it must be Fire from thence, and not of their kindling. And then, what was the cause? It was for an Affront put upon our Saviour himself, which, if any thing, would have justified them. But our Saviour Rebukes them, and tells them that they knew not what Spirits they were of; and expressly declares to them, that his coming into the World was to save Mens Lives, and not to destroy them. And they which carry on our Saviour's work, and are acted by a Gospel Spirit, they do the like. Was this Spirit of Popery learnt of the Blessed Jesus, that was Meek and Lowly in Heart, and bid us Learn of him to be such? Is it not rather the Spirit and work of him, that goeth about like a roaring Lyon, Seeking whom he may devour? This indeed is like the work of him, that was a Murtherer from the beginning. Is this the fruit of that Religion, that allows no Evil in any case whatsoever? that requires

requires patient bearing of Wrongs; and **Disc. X.**
doing Good for Evil? That if our Enemy
hunger requires us to feed him, and if he
thirst to give him Drink, and to win and
Overcome, by Gentleness, and heaping
coals of fire upon our Enemys head: And
doing as God himself, who causeth his
Sun to shine on the Evil and the Good, and
sendeth Rain on the just and unjust; and
that is kind to the unthankful and to
the Evil? Are these the fruits of the
Spirit, which are so famously described
Gal. 5. 22. and Col. 3. 12. Love, joy,
peace, long-suffering, patience, &c. [places
that I have had so often occasion to men-
tion in these Discourses.] And then the
Apostle chargeth us to Forgive one ano-
ther even as God for Christ's sake hath
Forgiven us. And this was the Life of
our Saviour. *He went about doing good,*
healing the Sick, comforting the Discon-
solate, and Instructing the Ignorant, and
Reclaiming the Disobedient, and bring-
ing them to the wisdom of the just.
This was the work and business of our
Blessed Saviour, all the time he lived in
the World; and ~~this~~ is that which he
expects from his Followers. So that I
may truly say, Christianity is the best
Principle of Kindness that ever came
into

Vol. I. into the World : But oft it cometh to
 ~~~~~ pass, that the corruption of the best  
 proves the worst. And this I have ob-  
 served, that where Modesty and Loving  
 Affection, are the natural Doury; there  
 in the Degenerate State is the greatest  
 Impudence and Cruelty. It hath been  
 long observed, that Faction and mista-  
 ken Zeal, are a kind of *wild fire*. The  
 more false any one is in his Religion,  
 the more Fierce and Furious: the more  
 mistaken, the more Imposing. The  
 more any Man's Religion is his *own*, the  
 more he is concerned for it, but cool  
 and indifferent enough for that which  
 is God's.

I will give you a few *Instances* to  
 shew you the Truth of this: That, the  
 more False any Man's Religion is, the  
 more Furious he will be in maintaining  
 it. *Acts 23. 12*, we read of some Men,  
 that out of their great Zeal for the  
 Mosaical Law, banded together and  
 bound themselves with an Oath, that  
 they would neither eat nor drink, till  
 they had killed *Paul*. And *1 Kings 18*.  
 we read of *Baal's Priests*, how that they  
 cut themselves after their manner, with  
 Knives and Lances, till the Blood  
 gushed out upon them, and cryed from  
 Morning

Morning to Evening, O Baal; hear Disc. X  
us, &c.

In like manner we read of the worshippers of *Diana*, *Acts* 19. that they were full of wrath and confusion, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. Also we read of *Balaam* the false Prophet, *Numb.* 23. how he built Altars, and offered Sacrifice from one place to another, thinking by these to bribe God; and at last built seven Altars, and prepared seven Bullocks and seven Rams, hoping by these to effect his Design. So likewise we read of those that burnt Incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, *Jer.* 44. 17. They confess this practice of burning Incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, and serving other Gods, whom neither they nor their Fathers had known. And these furious *Zealots* do such things in pursuit of their Devotion, that the Reason of Mankind condemned. They made a Religion to themselves, and then did such things in pursuance of their wild and bloody Devotion, as the very Reason of Mankind startled at; as you may see *Jer.* 32. 35. They made their Sons and their Daughters to pass through the fire unto *Molech*. A thing which God commanded them not,

S

neither



Vol. I. neither came it into his Mind. *Ezek.*  
 8. 13, 14, &c. You read of several  
 Abominations committed by the Chil-  
 dren of *Israel*, which were represented  
 to the Prophet in the dark. These  
 Men even spoyled the good Nature  
 they were born with, by cruel Practice;  
 and they became the worse for their  
 Religion.

I do conclude, that far better is Na-  
 ture alone, take it as it is, than that  
 Religion, which is Insincere and False.  
 I say it again, better Nature alone,  
 though Debased, Abused, and Negle-  
 cted, the very refuse of God's Crea-  
 tion; than *that* Religion, which is  
 False and Insincere. For *Aristotle* who  
 is credible in matters of Nature and  
 Reason, he hath observed, that Man  
 by his Nature and Constitution, is a  
 Mild and Gentle Creature; fitted for  
 Converse, and delighting in it. Cer-  
 tainly were I to take an Estimate of  
 Christianity, either from Popery, or a-  
 ny of the gross Superstitions of the  
 World, and the affected modes of Persons;  
 I would return to Philosophy again,  
 and let Christianity alone. For Philo-  
 sophy so far as it goes is Sincere and  
 True, and attains good Effects: It mol-  
 lifies

lives Mens Spirits, and rids them of all Barbarity. True indeed, it is short of Supernatural Revelation, and these things the Princes of the World did not know; as we read, 1 Cor. 2. 14. because they are spiritually discerned, that is, (according to the Sense of the Text) they are known only by Revelation from God. For he there doth give an account, that as no Man knows the things of a Man but the Spirit of a Man which is in him; so no Man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God. That is, the results of the Divine Will are not known, unless they be Revealed by the Spirit of God. This is the true meaning of this Text; and it is ill brought to prove, that a Man in the use of Reason and natural Light, cannot understand ought that belongs to his Salvation, or the Sense of any Text of Scripture. I am very confident, the Apostle never says nor means any such thing. But as the Secrets of a Man are known only to the Man himself, till he doth reveal them; so the Secrets of God are known only to God, till God reveal them; and till then we are not charged with them. For Negative Infidelity damns no Man.

Vol. I. But those that are acted by the Spirit of Popery, do corrupt the Word of God, as the Apostle says, 2 Cor. 2. 17. They make the Word of God to serve Ends and Purposes, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 1. 3. They make Merchandise of the Word of God, and make Gain their Godliness. That is, they gain Power and Wealth, and live in Pomp: these are the Ingredients that make up their Religion. But since they do Usurp upon us, we will put in these few Material Exceptions against them: and will shew wherein the Popish and Reformed Church differ.

1<sup>st</sup>. They impose upon our Belief things contrary to Reason, Self-inconsistent and Incongruous.

2<sup>dly</sup>. What of Truth they acknowledge, they make Void and Elude, by Qualifications, Explications, Limitations and Distinctions.

3<sup>dly</sup>. They superad to Religion, things unlikely to be True, Dishonourable to Human Nature, and without all warrant from God.

4<sup>ly</sup>. and Lastly, They frustrate the Effects of real Religion, by their pretence of Power and Privilege.

*First,*



*First*, They confound the Reason Disc. X.  
of our Minds, by Absurdities, Incon-  
gruities, and Imposing upon our Belief  
things impossible and inconsistent. These  
are strange things to be said of an y Reli-  
gion: yet I will make it evidently to ap-  
pear, and go no farther than the monstrous  
Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, which if  
we do admit, we must bid farewell to  
all our natural Sentiments. Reason must  
then be laid aside, and shall be no  
Judge hereafter. We must then give  
the Lye to the Report of our Senses.  
And if we do this, how shall we think  
that God made our Faculties True?  
But if God did not make my Facul-  
ties True, I am absolutely Discharged  
from all Duty to God, and Regard to  
his Commands, because I have no Fa-  
culty that can resolve me that this is  
of God. Now if I may not believe  
the Reason of my Mind, in conjunction  
with three or four of my Senses, how  
shall I know any thing to be this or  
that? And if I do not know any thing  
to be True, or Good, I am not obliged,  
as to Practice. And if God do require  
Duty of me, he useth Power against  
Right, and calls me to give an account,  
when it was not possible for me to

Vol. I know his Mind in any thing. Therefore, I say, *Transubstantiation* doth confound the Reason of our Mind, by Absurdities, and imposing upon our Beliefs, things that are impossible, and repugnant to our Senses.

*Secondly*, They make Void, what they themselves acknowledge to be True, by Distinctions, Evasions, Limitations, Glosses, Comments, Explications. And to make this out I will instance in six things.

*1st*. Their Doctrine of *Probability*. If a Man can find any Doctor among them that held such an Opinion, it makes that Doctrine probable.

*2dly*. The Point of *Mental Reservation*. You cannot know their Minds by what they say, because you do not know what they reserve in their Minds. So that what they say may be but half what they mean.

*3dly*. The Trick of *Directing the Intention*. By this they may murder a Man, so they do not intend to murder him, but to rid themselves of an Enemy. They may declare that which is False, and deny that which is True, because they intend the Credit of their Church and Religion: and this

this Intention shall excuse them from Disc. Xv  
down right Falshood.

4thly. The practise of *Equivocation*  
is too well known among them.

5thly. Their way of Evasion by ha-  
ving a *Double Sense*. Whereas no Man  
ought to use Wit or Parts, to impose  
upon another, or to make a Man be-  
lieve that which they do not mean. In  
treating one with another, we ought to  
take care, that there be a Right Un-  
derstanding between both Parties, and  
that each do understand one another's  
meaning. And in case there be a Mi-  
stake herein, we ought to release one  
another: for the Agreement is only in  
what we meant and intended; not in  
that wherein they did not consent and  
agree.

6thly. Their Shift of Hypocritical  
*Prolocution*. That is, to use Words of  
such a Sound when they do not intend  
such a thing by them, as a Man would  
think they did. Now all these are  
contrary to the Simplicity, and plain  
Heartedness that ought to be in our  
Converse one with another. I will not  
farther explain these things because they  
are abominable: and I would not teach  
any Man to be dishonest. For they are



Vol. I. Of such a Nature, that if you speak them, you teach them; and if you declare them, Men may learn them. But,

*Thirdly*, They superad things unlike to be True, and dishonourable to God, And this I will make appear in three things.

*1st.* Their use of *Images* in the Worship of God. How far better than this is that which we find among the Philosophers. God, say they, is to be worshipped by Purity of Mind; because a Spirit is best acknowledged by the Reason of Man's Understanding, and the Thought of his Heart. For this is the Worship most suitable to an Immaterial Being; and it is the Use of that in us, which is the highest and noblest of our Faculties. For the Spirit in Man is the *Candle of the Lord*, lighted by God, and a Light to direct us unto him; as we read *Act. 17. 27.*

*2dly.* The Veneration of *Reliques*. A very vain thing. For there can be no Certainty at this distance of time what they are; and if they were what they are taken for to be, what is due to them? For inanimate things are far inferior to those that have Life. And

we read that the less is Blessed of the Disc. X.  
greater, *Heb.* 7. 7. And *Solomon* saith,  
*Ecc.* 9. 9. That a living Dog is better  
than a dead Lyon. And, for the Li-  
ving to worship things that are Dead,  
is altogether irrational and unaccounta-  
ble. And for the worshipping of An-  
gels and Fellow Creatures, which is  
the

Third thing, Why should any Man  
so prostitute himself as to worship these?  
I am sure God would not have us do so:  
He would not have us adore any Crea-  
ture. For as the Apostle reasons, *Col.*  
2. 18. It is but a shew of Humility to  
worship Angels, and they are in the high-  
est Rank of Creatures. And if they  
are not to be worshipped (as it is plain  
from *Rev.* 22. 9. they are not) then  
surely none below them. And God  
hath declared, that there is but one  
God, and one Mediator between God  
and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.

Fourthly, They frustrate the Effect of  
Real Religion by their pretence to Power  
and Privilege. That is, they pretend to  
make that Lawful which is not Lawful.  
*Bellarmino* saith, That the Pope may  
declare Vertue to be Vice, and Vice  
Vertue. By this Practice they can turn  
Attrition

**Vol. I.** *Attrition* into *Contrition*, that is, They can make such a Consternation of Mind, as fell upon *Judas*, when he went and hanged himself, by the Priests Absolution to be *Contrition*; that is, change it into the notion of true Repentance, And also bodily Penance instead of an inward Change of the Mind. They pretend to work spiritual Effects by Virtue of Holy Water and the Cross. They pretend the Efficacy of Indulgences, for the Pardon of Sin; The Power of Absolving Men from Oaths and Obligations: All which are things unaccountable. There are three great Designs in Popery, and I will tell you what they are. **1<sup>st</sup>.** To keep the Civil Magistrate in Awe. **2<sup>d</sup>.** To maintain the Clergy in State and Honour. **3<sup>d</sup>.** To keep the People in Ignorance, and so to enslave them, and disable them to see or know. These are three great things in Popery. If any of you desire any of these three things, Popery is for your Turn; but if you would maintain the Honour and Privilege of Human Nature, then you must give your Testimony against it.

But



But in true Religion, there is nothing Disc. X.  
which the Reason of Mankind can challenge or object against: nothing wherein the Reason of Mankind may not have so good an account, so as to have Satisfaction.

And to declare the plain Truth. I do not at all understand that there is any Religion farther than *that* which is owned among Protestants. What they have more among the Papists is accommodated to serve Ends and Purposes. The most Learned among the Church of Rome acknowledg the Materials of our Religion to be true. As for the Ignorant, they are of no consideration in point of Judgment; no more than the Opinion of a Blind Man, in point of colours, or of a Deaf Man as to sounds.

I conclude this with what a great Abbot in their Church was wont to say. That he did greatly suspect that his Religion must needs fail, because there was so little ground for it in the word of God. I will add to what he said, That there is as little ground for it in the Principles of God's Creation, or in that which we call Natural Religion.

Now

Vol. I. Now I come to give you an account  
 of the *Reformed Church*. And I will  
 say concerning it, That it doth neither  
 Persecute, nor hold any Principle of  
 Disturbance, but maintain Principles of  
 Peace. If any Man in the *Reformed*  
*Church* do, I must declare, that it is  
 the Fault of particular Parties, and not  
 to be charged upon the *Reformed*  
*Church*. And to make this appear, I will  
 begin with what the *Church of England*  
 declares; and I had best for that, quote  
 some of the *Homilies*, of which there is  
 one concerning Contention and Strife,  
 and particularly that which is occasion-  
 ed by Principles of Religion. The  
 words are these: "It is far better and  
 " more worthy for any one to give  
 " place to another, and let his Argu-  
 " ment fall, than to win the *Victory* with  
 " breach of *Charity*. An excellent de-  
 termination, which you shall find in the  
 Homily against Strife and Contention.  
 Then for the *Antients*, I will quote you  
 two or three sayings of theirs.  
 'Tis, saith one, Unnatural to Re-  
 ligion to be forced; for a Man's Re-  
 ligion must be chosen. *St. Austin* gives  
 this account of the Circumcellions the  
 worst sort of *Donatists*. Saith he, " we  
 " bring

“ bring these before  
 “ the Civil Magi-  
 “ strate, not because  
 “ they err in matters  
 “ of Faith, but be-  
 “ cause they perse-  
 “ cute and are trou-  
 “ blesome to right  
 “ Believers. They  
 brought them be-  
 fore the Magistrate,

*Non esse petendum ab  
 Imperatoribus, ut ipsam He-  
 resim juberent omnino non  
 esse, penam constituendo eis  
 qui in illa esse voluissent, &  
 sed hoc potius constituerent,  
 ut eorum furiosas violentias  
 non paterentur qui verita-  
 tatem Catholicam vel pra-  
 dicarent loquendo, vel le-  
 gerent constituendo. Aug.  
 Ep. 40. E. vid. & Ep. 68,  
 159.*

to restrain their violence ; not to com-  
 pel them to believe. Thus St. *Austin*.  
 And indeed there needs nothing to pro-  
 mote Religion, but gentle and friend-  
 ly ways. For in point of *Natural Re-*  
*ligion*, (which takes in Sobriety, Righte-  
 ousness, and Piety) you may easily  
 satisfy any Man by Reason. For no  
 Man is in any thing more certain, than  
 that he ought to be Sober and Tempe-  
 rate ; than that he ought to deal Righte-  
 ously, and so as he would be dealt by ;  
 and that he ought to carry himself equal-  
 ly and fairly. And that he ought to  
 Fear and Reverence the Deity : for these  
 are the dictates of Natural Light. And  
 therefore if we will *show our selves* to  
 be *Men*, we must Live in the practice of  
 these Principles and comply with them.  
 And



Vol. I.

And then for other matters, Matters of *Revealed Religion* and Truth; in these, we are persuaded by the Word of God. By the Reason of the Things themselves in matters of the former Sort: and by the Revelation of God's Word, in the latter. And if the Spirit of God doth not satisfy, and persuade the Mind of Man to receive, and entertain these, as they are here declared; then there is no possibility of making this Man to become a *Christian*. For you cannot Force Christianity; because it is matter of Supernatural Revelation: here you cannot convince Men by Reason, which is the only way to deal with Men in other matters. And so the Apostle hath told us; because these are the Results of God's Will, therefore it follows that they are only knowable by God's Revelation of them to us, 1 Cor. 2 11. *As no man knows the things of a man but the spirit of a man which is in him, so no man knows the things of God, but the spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit will Reveal them.*

Now I will give you an Account of the main Principles of the *Reformed Religion*: what it doth Maintain, Allow, Defend and Practise. And lay it out, in Eight Particulars. 1. The

1. The Reformed Religion doth Disc. X.  
allow and maintain the Worship of   
God, and all the Offices in Religion,  
to be performed in the *Vulgar Tongue*.  
So that Knowledge and Devotion may  
be had and promoted.

2. The Reformed Religion doth own  
the *Free Use of Scripture*, both in Pub-  
lick and Private; and call upon Men  
to do as our Saviour adviseth, viz.  
*To search the Scriptures*, for by them  
we hope to find Eternal Life. For these  
are they which make the Man of God  
perfect, and richly furnish him for eve-  
ry good Work; and by these we are  
able to render a Reason of the Hope  
that is in us.

3. The Reformed Church doth hold  
that the Scripture is the *only Rule of*  
Faith: And therefore Traditions, Coun-  
sels, and Fathers, and the Writings of  
Learned Men, are only to be used as  
Helps, better to understand the Scrip-  
ture: But they are *not* to be lookt up-  
on as any Rule of Faith; but in this  
case, we say, as the Apostle, *If I, or*  
*an Angel from Heaven preach any o-*  
*ther Doctrine than that which we have*  
*delivered unto you, let him be Accur-*  
*sed.* It is well resolved by S. Austin, who  
saith,

Vol. I. saith, if any one of us offer that which  
 is not in Scripture, any Man that hears,  
 hath more Authority to Refuse, than  
 the other hath to Declare. But in Popery  
 we find *Twelve New Articles* at once  
 imposed upon us.

4. We of the Protestant Religion do  
 assert, that every one hath the Right  
 of his *Private Judgment*. But we do  
 advise, that to the end Men may be a-  
 ble to distinguish between Good and  
 Evil, Truth and Falshood; they make  
 themselves Capable of this Right by  
 Prayer and Meditation, and diligent  
 Search, and Conference, and other  
 Helps of Knowledge. Advising Men  
 to be Modest, Humble, Sober and Tem-  
 perate: And to lay aside all Fondness  
 and Partiality of serving Ends, when  
 they come to read the Scripture: Saying  
 as *Austin* once did, When you take up  
 the Bible to read, you must not seek  
 there for an Argument to confirm your  
 Opinion, but resolve to entertain that  
 Opinion which the Text doth direct and  
 warrant. Now the *Romanists* tell us  
 of what great Acquisition they have  
 made, how many they have brought  
 to their Church, by their way of Force  
 and Violence; and particularly they  
 brag



brag of what they have done in the Disc. X<sup>r</sup> Indies. For which I shall quote you the Testimony of a great *Abbot*, that was then a Bishop among them; his Words are these, "Who after a brutish manner drive People to *Baptism*, as Men drive Beasts to Watering, and Butcher far more than they Baptise."

5. We do declare, That the Teachers of the Church ought *not* to be Dictators, or Masters of Mens Faith; but Helpers of Mens Faith; for they are *not to make Religion, but to shew it*. They do not take away the Key of Knowledge from the People, as our Saviour chargeth the *Pharisees*, Luk. 11. 22. Or as *S. Austin* saith, they do not command Faith in Men, upon Peril of Damnation, to shew their Superiority, or to practice as Governours; but they do appear in the good Office of Direction, and giving Men Counsel. 'Tis not Pride of Ruling and shewing Power, but out of Compassion to lead People into the Way of Truth, and to recover them out of Error and Mistake.

6. We tell People that the *Scripture* is clear, and full, and *perspicuous* in all things

T

Vol. I. things necessary, as to all matters of Life and Practice. So that if People be well minded, and use Diligence, they may easily understand, and be satisfied. We never teach them to resign up themselves to Others, nor to believe as Others do blindfold, to believe as the Church believes. 'Tis true, to give you a little Account of this, there are in the *Bible* things of a very different Nature.

1. There are Matters of *Antient Records*, the History of former Times; and these things were far better known then, than they are now, at this distance of time,

2. There are in the Scripture things that are wholly expired, and *out of date*, and so of less use to us, as the whole Mosaical Dispensation.

3. There are in Scripture Matters of *Propheſie*, fitted for those times; which they did far better understand, than we do now; and wherein they were far more concerned, than we are. For they are Transactions partly of things performed, which when fulfilled were best understood.

4. And there are Matters of deep *Philosophy*, as also Matters of *Philology*; and

and these do not belong to the Business of Religion. Disc. X.

And Lastly, There is the *Moral Part* of Religion, and our Saviour's Doctrine; and in these two, our Religion consists; and these are easily learnt and understood. I say, the Moral Part of Religion, and the Doctrine of our Saviour, which are easie to be understood. And for the other Parts of Scripture, they are not of such concern to the community of Mankind. And if we do not fully understand them, we are safe enough; if so be we are brought to real Goodness and Vertue, and to believe in God through Jesus Christ.

7. The Reformed Church doth not deceive Men by any ways of *Fraud* and *Falshood*. Those of the *Romish* Church, that hold the Doctrine of *Implicit Faith*, and the Doctrine of *Merit*, and teach that *Masses* ought to be said to relieve Souls in *Purgatory*; These Impostures and Cheats we put upon none. Indeed we do allow *Implicit Faith* in *God*, where we cannot certainly understand what his meaning is, in any particular Text. That is, we do believe that what the Divine



Vol. I. Spirit meant by these Words, is true; and when it doth appear unto us, we will receive and admit it. And this Faith we allow.

But an Implicit Faith, in Men, or in the Church, this is Popery. We deal honestly with Men, for we plainly declare to Men, that without personal Holiness, they cannot see the Face of God: according as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 12. 14. and Eph. 4. 24. That we must be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds.* This we declare and inculcate, and admonish Men about the Effects of Regeneration; and the Motion of True Godly Repentance, and turning from Sin to God. As also put Men in Mind, upon all Occasions, that this is a Probation State, and that Men are here to be Fitted and Qualified for the State of Glory and Immortality. And that Men ought to lead Christian Lives, and not referr themselves to a Death-bed Repentance, which is very hazardous and uncertain. For how can Men get Knowledge all in a Moment? Is the time of Sicknes a time for Men to Learn? When Men should come to Practise, is that a time to be Taught? When Men are put upon the very last nick of acting.

Or

Or to get themselves released from long Dis-  
and naughty Habits, all on a suddain;  
and the Faculties released from such  
Inclinations; when as the Prophet tells  
us, that it is next to Washing the Black-  
more white, for Men that have been  
Accustomed to do Evil, to do Well.  
So that we deal honestly and upright-  
ly with Men, telling them, as they ex-  
pect to be Happy hereafter, in this  
State to acquaint themselves with ne-  
cessary Knowledge, and to get them-  
selves discharged from all naughty Ha-  
bits, which will not be easie to do up-  
on a Sick-bed; especially if Men have  
long Abused themselves, through ill  
Use, Custom, and Practise.

8. We do resolve, that all they who  
do agree in the main Points of Re-  
ligion, may look upon themselves as  
Members of the same Church, notwith-  
standing any different Apprehensions in  
other Matters. And this is a Principle  
of Peace and Charity; and this Know-  
ledge tends to the Reconciliation of  
Men, and to make them Live together  
like Christians, in Love and good Will.  
And for this, I will quote you the say-  
ing of the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 15. Let us  
therefore as many as be perfect, be thus*  
T 3 *minded*

Vol. I. *minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

I will Conclude all with that Saying of a great Schoolman, who spake indifferently of the State of the Reformed, and *Romish* Church. “ For Men  
“ to Differ about Matters of particular  
“ Persuasion and Opinion, it is not  
“ inconsistent with that imperfect State  
“ which we are in, while in the way  
“ to Heaven; when we come thither,  
“ we shall be consummated, and more  
“ fully harmonize: but to differ in  
“ Opinion, is not repugnant to Peace  
“ in the way; though the Difference  
“ shall be taken away when we come  
“ Home.

Now if it be otherwise with any Man, that owns the Reformed Religion: I must tell you, that though he may Profess he is of the Reformed Religion, he is *Popish* in the Protestant Profession. For these are Matters wherein they of the Protestant Religion do Agree: And if any Man Question any of those, he is so far *Popish* in the Protestant Profession.



# DISCOURSE XI.

## *The Deceitfulness of Sin.*

Heb. iii. 13.

*Take heed, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.*

**W**E are in this World in a State Dis. XI.  
 of Probation, and have many  
 Enemies to encounter with: So that  
 our Condition is very dangerous, both  
 from *Force* and *Fraud*, and from Fraud  
 the worst of the two. For if a Man  
 be ill dealt withal, and Forced, he is  
 excused because he could not help it:  
 But if any Man suffer from *Fraud*, he is  
 both Laughed at, and Self-condemned.  
 Now, He is couzened and cheated, that  
 upon any Representation made to him  
 of things without, either doth or per-  
 mits what is in it self Sinful or Un-  
T 4
lawful.

Vol. I. lawful. And by *this Rule* you may estimate all that I have to say.

I shall,

I. Give you an account of the *Deceitfulness of Sin.* And,

II. Shew you the great *Reason* we have to *take heed*, that we be not deceived.

I. My Business shall be to shew you the *Deceitfulness* of Sin, and how much thereby we are in Danger. And this I will do in ten Particulars.

I. Evil takes *another Name*, though it doth always retain its Nature. And because it must not be known by its own Name, it doth adopt it self into the Family of some of the Vertues, as if it were like to some of them. And things that are alike do oft impose upon unwary Persons. Now because a particular Rule is best known by *Instances*, I will mention several. Covetousness passeth for a thrifty Temper, and good Husbandry. Prodigality for being Generous. Vanity is reputed necessary Remission of Mind:  
And

And Foolish Talking to be Affable Conversation. Lavish Expence of Time, goes for Exercise and Recreation due to the Body. Finding Fault with Others, is reckoned to be Reproof of Sin. Sharpness and Severity, to be strictness of Conscience. Backbiting is accounted an Endeavour for Reformation: Jealousie and Suspicion to be Care for Right and Truth. Busie meddling with other Mens Affairs, Lives, and Judgments, is said to be Activity for the Advancement of Religion. And to controul others Liberty, a Care for their Souls. Presumption is thought to be Faith in God. Curious Determinations beyond Scripture, to be the Improvement of Faith: And inconsiderate Dulness to be the Denial of our Reason. Malecontent to be Sorrow for Sin. Excessive Use of the Creatures, to be Christian Liberty. Compliance beyond Measure to be Good Fellowship. Fond Imaginations to be Divine Inspiration. Extravagancies of Passion, to be the unavoidable Motion of a Cholerick Temper. Taking too much upon Ones Self, and Over bearing the Company in Discourse and converse, to be better Improvements of the Talent.



**Vol. I.** Talent. Fierceness in a Sect, in a particular Way or Mode, to be a greater Care of Religion. Speaking without Sense, to be the Simplicity of the Spirit. Sheepishness, to be Modesty. Diffidence, to be Humility. Affording hard Measure, to be standing for ones Right. Petulancy and Animosity, to be Generousness, Courage, Good Mettle, and like a Man of Spirit. Canning Craftiness, to be Prudence and Policy. Neglect and Careless Omissions, to be Infirmities only, the Weaknesses of the Saints.

Thus there are many things which pass for a due Temper, and regular Motion in Religion, which are not the Perfections they are taken for, but rather the contrary. I cannot now stand to convince these severally of Deceit; but if they be enquired into, they will not be found to be the things they pretend to be.

The Second and Third I will put together. Sometimes Evil suggesteth to us Pleasure and Delight, and sometimes Gain and Profit. And these two, Pleasure and Profit, are the Baits that take with all Men that are not of fixed and resolved Virtue. Now the Scrip-  
ture

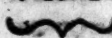
ture supposeth both of these; and therefore we read of the *Pleasures of Sin*, that they are but for a Season. And also it telleth us of the *Wages of Unrighteousness*. But solid and true Pleasure, Gain, and Satisfaction to a Mind well instructed, is only to be found in the ways of Vertue and Goodness. For *Solomon* tells us, That *the Ways of Wisdom are pleasant*: And *Godliness is great Gain*, saith the Apostle.

4. Evil holds us in hand that it is a matter of our *Right*, and that which we may do in the use of our *Liberty*. Whereas 'tis not Power, to be able to do that which is not fit to be done: This is not Liberty, but Licentiousness, Wantonness, to do Evil, or to serve any Lust. But we are greatly bent to maintain our Right, and shew our Power. Jezebel, spake thus to *Ahab*, when he was troubled for *Naboth's Vineyard*: Dost thou govern *Israel*, and knowest not how to have *Naboth's Vineyard*? Arise, eat bread, and let thine Heart be merry: I will give thee the Vineyard of *Naboth the Jezreelite*. And she gave it him, but upon strange Terms; by Wilful Murther, Perjury, and Subornation; thus did she use her Power, 1 *King*. 21.

*Ad malum non datur posse. Possesse malum, non est posse. Illud possumus, quod jure possumus.*

5. Evil

Vol. I.



*Totus Mundus agit  
Histrionem.  
Honestum  
habetur pro  
inutili.*

*Qui nescit  
dissimulare  
nescit vivere.*

Gen. 37.

29.

2 Sam. 11.

15.

2 Sam. 14.

*Etc.*

*In nomine  
Domini incipit omne  
malum.*

Gen. 3. 5.

Prov. 5. 3.

*Intelligitur  
non tam de  
Sexu mulie-  
bri, quam  
de tenta-  
tione suavi.*

Ex. 32.

Numb. 23.

26.

Rev. 2. 14.

1 Sam. 13.

12.

5. *Evil* Covers it self with some probable Notion, or Circumstance. Nothing in this vain World is more usual than Colours, Pretences, Representations, Excuses, Appearances contrary to Reality and Truth. *Joseph's* Brethren's selling him is covered with their *not having their Hands upon him.* *David's* murdering *Uriah* by drawing him out on the forlorn; his numbring the People, by the Privilege of a Prince. When was it known that Evil walked abroad without a Disguise? A fair pretence for a foul Action. The Devil's Hook is too well baited to be seen. The Serpent proposed to our *first Parents* their being like unto Gods. The lips of the strange Woman drop as the Honey Comb: and her mouth is smoother than Oyl. The Worshippers of the Golden Calf consecrated a day unto the Lord. *Balaam* is in shew for the Observance of God: But he taught *Balaak* to cast a stumbling Block before the Children of *Israel*. *Saul* takes upon him to offer a burnt-offering contrary to the exprefs Command of God. He saith, *The Philistines are upon me, and I have not made supplication unto the*

*Lord.*



Lord: and he spared the fattest of the Cattle that he might offer them in Sacrifice. Corah, Dathan and Abiram justified their Rebellion against Moses and Aaron with this pretence, that they took too much upon them: Seeing that all the congregation was Holy, as well as themselves; therefore why should they lift up themselves above the Congregation of the Lord? Here is a pretence of maintaining the just Liberty of the Congregation. So they that would take away the Life of our Blessed Saviour say it is expedient that one Man should dye, and that the Nation perish not. John II. 50.

6. Evil Warrants it self sometimes by the difference of Time and Place, sometimes by Measure and Degree, sometimes by Mode and Manner, Forasmuch as that may be done at one Time that may not be done at another; distinguish but of Times, (they will say) and then they think they shall be able to justify themselves. And then by Measure and Degree, although it be one of the most difficult things in the World to assign Mode and Measure, yet Men will say it may be done in another Place, though not in this; and in this Manner, though not in that, or after any Fashion; and

Dis. XI.

1 Sam. 15.  
15.

Numb. 16  
3. 7.

Licetis perimus omnes,

Bonum ex integris canis, malum ex quolibet defectu.

to

**Vol. I.** to such a Measure and Degree. The Sluggard was for a little Sleep, a little Slumber, &c. till Evil had taken hold of him, and got an Advantage upon him. In many Cases it is very hard to fix the utmost Bounds of Good and Evil, because these part as Day and Night which are separated by Twilight: so that there is as dim Day, light between both. It is a very nice point for a Man to know how far he may go, and farther he may not.

7. Evil pleads sometimes the *Necessity* of the Case, and that it is unavoidable. The *Law of the Time*, the *Necessity of the Case*, This answers all Objections to the contrary. Though I must tell you, there is no Necessity at all to do that which is Evil; for the worst that the World can do unto us, is not so bad, as to do Evil. And we must rather expose to hazard the loss of our Lives, and all we have, than give God an Offence. For it is better to dye in Reconciliation to God, than to Live Ten Thousand Years in all the pleasures and jollity of this World. This we find was *Herod's* justification of himself, when he did contrary to the very sense of his own Mind. He cut off *John Baptist's*

Christ's Head because of his Oath, and because of those that were with him at that time. But take this for a Notion, Necessity may put us upon Inconveniences, but Necessity must never put us upon Iniquity, or make us consent to Evil. There is no Necessity of Sin: for altho' we Live no longer here, we shall Live in a better State. We must not save our Lives, and destroy the cause of Life. To live is to be in good Temper of Mind, and regular in our Actions and Practice.

8. When Evil hath once entangled us, there is another Evil (and it may be a greater) thought necessary to *hide*, or *extenuate* it. For Evil if it be lookt into, will be Ashamed of it self. Upon this account it is that Men are Ashamed to own it, and sometimes with a Lye deny it. When Cain had murdered his Brother, to the very face of God himself, he tells a Lye. So *Ananias* and *Saphira*, when they had sold the Possession and pretended that they brought all, and laid it down at the Apostle's feet, whenas it was but a part. It had been an Act of Christian Charity, to have brought any part; so they had been sincere and hearty in it; but they are said to Lye



Vol. I. to the Holy Ghost. Seldom one Evil goes alone. *Gehazi* did the first Evil Action in going after *Naaman* the Syrian, and asking him for Gold, and change of Rayment, without his Master's Commission. But then this puts him upon another Lye to justify it, and then more followed, as you may see in the Story.

9. Evil justifies it self by Prescription and General practice. So it was formerly, and so it is still. And this is taken for a Justification. This was the practice of those *Israelites* that were not carried away Captive, who dissembled with the Prophet, and with God himself. Who, tho' they enquired what they should do, yet were resolved to do as their *Fathers* did before them; because then, they said, it was well with them, when they offered Incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, and therefore they would do so again. Things that are in use and custom, Men think they may do; and what have been done before them. What, will they say, shall I be wiser then my Forefathers? This is the Answer of many *Papists* among us, who will hear nothing that is said to them, because they will not Damn those that went before them, nor pretend to be wiser than their

their Ancestors; others say, what shall we call into Question common practice? do not those that are wiser and more learned than I, do the same things? Nay, do not Men of Place and Power do the same things? This is just like *Ahab* to *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* 22. Do not all the Prophets speak so and so? let thy word be like unto theirs. Not a word of what God should say unto him, or what was *True* and *Right*; but let thy word be like unto the rest of the Prophets. So it is with many Men, they follow other Men's practice, without considering what is *Right* and *Fit* to be done.

10. I shall observe in the Last place, that which is most dangerous of all others, and that is this; when the *first motion* towards Repentance and Conversion is lookt upon as if it were the Sovereign Remedy of Repentance it self. As if Sorrow for Sin, were the whole product of Repentance; whereas indeed, that which is true Repentance, must be accompanied with the Forsaking of Sin, and bringing forth the Fruits of Righteousness. By which *St. John* means the Reformation and Amendment of our Lives.

U

And

Vol. I. And that I may the better satisfy you in this, I desire you to consider, that the *first motions* of Repentance have been, where nothing that was *good* followed upon it. We read that *Judas* was sorry for his Sin, in betraying our Saviour; but what followed upon it? nothing but Desperation and Self-Murder. *Cain* was sensible of the Murder of his Brother, and affected with the Consequence that he thought would follow upon it; for, saith he, every one that meets me will kill me: Though this fear seemed very unreasonable at that Time. We read in the 2 Pet. 2. 18. of some that were *clean escaped* from the Pollutions of the World, that were again entangled, whose Last end was worse than their Beginning. And that it is better not to have known the way of Righteousness, than afterward to depart from the Holy Commandment. My *caution* therefore is, That if you look towards God, and your Minds serve you to make any Application to Him; That you pursue that good motion till you bring it into a settled State; for otherwise the first motion toward Repentance may prove an Aggravation of your Sin, and heavier Condemnation.

Th



Thus I have given you Ten Instances of the Deceitfulness of Sin. And, as I told you at first, it will trouble us less to be over-born and forced, than to be cheated. For the former we may not be able to help; but we cannot be deceived, if we be but as wise as we should, and ought to be. That one Man is Stronger and Richer than another may not be in our power to help; but if a Man be not as wise and vertuous as another, it may be much his own Fault. For this depends upon his own due care, and the Improvement of those Faculties that God hath given him. And I am of opinion, that we should all be wise enough one for another, if we were but equally honest. The Truth is, if any one be dishonest, he may deceive a good Man: for such a Man is given to Charity, and apt to Think of others, as he finds himself, and so to have a good Opinion. But if I am cheated a second time, I am a Fool. We read of persons that lay under worldly Disadvantages, that yet arrived to great Wisdom and Understanding. The Poor Man by his Wisdom saved the City, *Eccles. 3.* and we read of a wise Woman that saved her Husband, and a great many People.

Vol. I. People. And poor Lazarus was wise for Eternity. Therefore, as I said, we may be Over-born by Power without any great Disparagement; but we cannot be Cheated, but it must have an ill Reflexion upon our selves. For no Man makes a Bargain unless he please, and he need not unless he will. If he want Experience, why doth he not Advise? So that, if he be Cheated it is long of his weakness, wilfulness, or rashness; for he might have prevented it. No Man is ashamed that another is preferred before him in Wealth and Ability: but the meekest Creature will be impatient to be thought to want Wit, or to be accounted a Fool.

Having thus given an account of the Deceitfulness of Sin; I will,

II. Shew you in some Particulars how great Reason we have, according to the Advice of the Apostle, to take heed that we are not deceived,

I. Because in this state we run a manner of Hazards and Dangers: To which God that hath a care of his Creatures, doth yet suffer us to be exposed and that Grace he affords us is not only for Ornament, but for Conflict. Some u

the Grace of God more; and some less; *Dis. XI.*  
and others wholly neglect it. God did  
account, that we should use and em-  
ploy the Faculties which he gave us;  
and 'tis unaccountable to God, if any  
Man comes into Human Nature, and  
doth not so use Mind and Understand-  
ing (that is capable of God, and re-  
ceptive from God, and fit to make ac-  
knowledgments to him) I say, if he doth  
not use it for these Purposes. For here we  
are to *fight the good fight of Faith,*  
*1 Tim. 6. 12. To run a Race, 1 Cor.*  
*9. 24, 26. and obtain a Prize.* In the  
Work of Religion, much is here to  
be done, many Temptations to be re-  
sisted, many Conflicts to be made.

2. Our several Faculties have diffe-  
rent Inclinations, and some of them  
are not at all capable of Reason, there-  
fore not to be governed by any Moral  
Considerations: which make it a very  
hard Province that we are to Act in;  
Many of our Faculties are governed  
only by Restraint, and are not held  
or drawn by the *Cords of a Man.* As  
for Example, *Appetite;* for which Rea-  
son *Solomon* saith, *put a Knife to thy*  
*Throat, if thou beest a Man given unto*  
*it.* For Reason will not satisfy an Ex-



Vol. I. **Exorbitant Appetite**, and this creates to us great Difficulty. This is the Rule in all things, That a Man act according to Reason, which is the *Candle of the Lord* set up in him; and by this, he should be directed, and see his way before him. For even the Grace of God doth adjoyn it self only to our Higher Principles. For this end it is given to guide and direct them; but for our lower Faculties, they are otherwise to be dealt with: we must offer Violence to them if they be Exorbitant.

3. Things without us, and round about us, presented with their several Advantages, do many times *Provoke* and *Allure* us, and are hardly to be denied. And a Man hath nothing to withhold him but the Virtue of his Mind and Respect to God. And abundance in the World are so *Prophane*, as to decry these Principles, as things of *Fancy* and *Imagination*. Therefore it is necessary that we should be settled in a *State of Vertue*, or we shall never like *Joseph* be able to resist Evil, and to say, *how can I do this Wickedness, and sin against God?* Therefore saith *Solomon*, *Prov. 2.* Let Understanding guide thee, let Discretion keep thee.

4. That

4. That which should be for our *DR. XI*  
 Security, viz. *Company and Converse*; this oftentimes becomes a Share to us: Though (as *Solomon* saith) two is better than one, because if one fall, the other shall lift him up. And this was the Design of God in making a *Second* to be an Help unto the *First*; that so, that which is Finite, might be better secured by another: yet it often falls out that we are in great Hazard by our very *Company and Converse*. For *Company* is of a Bewitching, Moulding and Transforming Nature: And therefore we should take great heed of our *Company*, and Associates. Go not (saith *Solomon*) in the way of Sinners, avoid it, pass from it, and pass away. And *David* saith, sit not in the seat of the scornful. And we have a Rule, that *whosoever is not known by himself, may be known by his Company*. For *Converse* doth assimilate; and a Man either finds his *Company* such as he is, or he will be like them. *Ecclus. 13. 1. For he that toucheth Pitch* *Malus mas*  
*that defileth, will be defiled; and he* *lum aut in-*  
*that goeth with vain Persons shall be* *venit, aut*  
*vain.* *facit.*

Vol. I.

5. He that is Officious to bring us into his Condemnation, he is forward to fit us with suitable Objects that shall raise our Apprehensions, and draw us into Evil. This he did to our first Parents. It is good for Food, and desirable to make one Wise, said the Serpent to *Eve*. And we read *Matth. 4. 10.* That *Satan* shewed to our Saviour all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, and said, *These will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and Worship me.* And we read, that he was a Lying Spirit in the Mouths of four hundred false Prophets at one time. And that the Devil is so busie to seduce, and draw Men into Evil, may appear to be the common Sense of *Mankind*, by those Expressions we find in the *Arraignment* of notorious Malefactors, who are said, not to have the Fear of God before their Eyes, but to act by the Instigation of the Devil. As he that endeavours to Purifie himself shall not want the Divine Assistance to encourage and assist him; so on the contrary he that neglects himself, and consents to known Iniquity, shall not want those that will Drive him on. And as we say, *he must needs*



needs go, that the Devil drives. But **Dist. XL**  
 then, *ob non solum, sed etiam* 

6. There are many Things Impure and contrary to Religion, to which we are tempted, that the World do not reckon among the greatest Crimes. There are other Evils that are destructive to us, besides *Treason, Murder, and Theft*. And these we are to beware of, as well as those that make us Obnoxious to Humane Laws, as I will give you some *Instances*. It is a very great Evil to make God a *Mean*, and the World an *End*, to Name God, *Uti Deo, &c.* and to intend the World. *frui Munda.* I dread to have to do with any Man that will make use of his Religion, to gain him Credit, and to make a Bargain. As also to be under the Power of the World, and wholly at its Beck or Call, or to be under the Power of ungoverned Passions, to be vainly fraught and possest, to be out of the true Use of Reason, and Self-Government. These are instances of Evils that are very destructive, though the World takes little notice of Them, and do not reckon Them in the number of Mortal Sins. Yet if a Man will secure his Interest for Eternity, he must take care to

Vol. I. to avoid these Things. And herein is  
 our great Danger, because Men do not  
 Charge themselves in these things, as  
 in other Crimes. 7. Man is such a *Compound*, that  
 Heaven and Earth, as it were, meet in  
 him; Terms that are extremely distant.  
 Man in respect of his Mind, is qualified  
 to converse with Angels, and to attend  
 upon God. And in respect of these  
 noble Faculties, he is liable to be Tem-  
 pted to Insolency, Arrogancy, and great  
 Presumption, and Self-exaltation. For  
 it cannot be denied, but that in respect  
 of his highest Faculties, he is the *Image*  
 of God, which is his Honour; being  
 both Intelligent and Voluntary, having  
 Understanding, Liberty, and Freedom;  
 which is his Prerogative, above all other  
 Creatures below him. But yet in re-  
 spect of these, he is Tempted to lift  
 up himself, and this was the fall of  
*Lucifer*. Though there be no Reason  
 for it; for what is a Ray that flows  
 from the Sun, to the Sun it self? which  
 the Sun could spare, without any Di-  
 minution. Why should an Arbitrary  
 and Precarious Being, lift up it self,  
 and leave God out? What an Iniquity is  
 this! for such Beings to act as Inde-  
 pendent,

pendent, Self-sufficient, never to acknowledge God as Original, or referring to Him as Final, or resting in Him as the Centre of his Spirit. This is a high Misbehaviour in an intelligent Agent, far from Duty, Humility, or Modesty. Yet this he may be Tempted unto, by Reason of his Height and Excellency, in respect of his higher Faculties. Now in respect of his *Lower parts*, he is apt to sink down into Sensuality and Brutishness: Man in Honour, and not understanding himself, is like the Beasts that perish. From all which you may perceive, in how great Danger Man is, and what great need there is that he be not deceived.

8. I add, If we do not Use self-Government, and moderate our Powers by subduing the Inferiour to the Superiour, we fail in that which is our proper Work and Province, as we are invested with Intellectual Nature. And if we are led to gratify Sense against Reason, we are cheated and couzened. We render those words of the Apostle Rom. 13. 14. *καταργήσωμεν τὰ ἐν τῷ σώματι*, to make provision for the flesh: but the Greek word signifies to make it the Business of Mind and Understanding to *cater for the Body*: which is no less than

to



**VOL. I.** to make it the Employment of the Spirit, to feed the Beast; when it should be the Business of Mind and Understanding, to contemplate God and Things Divine. For otherwise, the Mind of Man, is as the Field of Solomon's Sluggard, that instead of bringing a good Crop, is over-grown with Thorns and Briars. And a Man Lives in a Lye, and hath no true Judgment. For the use of Judgment is to observe the Difference of things: which he doth not, that knows not how to value Spiritual and Eternal things before those that are Present and Temporal.

*Ad majora  
nati sumus.*

9. *Lastly*, If God be not understood and acknowledged in our worldly enjoyments, and recommended to us by them: If he be not intended, in all our Actions, then do we not comply with the Relation we stand in to God; nor act according to our Highest Principles, nor answer our Capacity, nor are true to our own Interest. For it is the work of Mind and Understanding, to Seek after God, and to find him out in his ways and works, as you read *Act. 17. 27.* To be without God in the World, is our Degeneracy in full proportion; and to Alienate our selves from him, is the greatest

*ad 17. 27.*

greatest and truest *Sacrilege*. For our highest Faculties are God's peculiar, God's appropriate, God's reserve, made for God, and fit to attend upon him, and to receive from him. Since therefore there is this Danger, 1<sup>st</sup>. Let us act with Caution and with good Advice, by conversation with the Best and Wisest Men. For 'tis an easy matter to be deceived, without great Care and Diligence. 2<sup>dly</sup>. But chiefly let us make *Application to God*, by Meditation, and Prayer, who will not be wanting to us. Let us carefully avoid all Presumption, Pride, Arrogancy, and Self-Assuming. Do not on the Suddain, but See before you Do: and Understand well before you Act. And in all thy ways Acknowledg God, and Lean not to thy own understanding.

DIS-

greatest and truest sacrifice. For our Dil. XI.  
 highest sacrifices are God's peculiar,  
 God's propitiating, God's selective, made  
 for God, and fit to amend upon him,  
 and to receive from him. Since there-  
 fore there is this Danger, let us act  
 with Caution and with good Advice,  
 by conversation with the Best and Wisest  
 Men. For it is an easy matter to be de-  
 ceived without great Care and Dil-  
 igence. Only, first, chiefly let us make  
 application to God, by Meditation, and  
 Prayer, who will not be wanting to us,  
 let us carefully avoid all Presumption,  
 Pride, Arrogancy, and Self-Flattery.  
 Do not on the Sabbath, but see before  
 you do; and understand well before  
 you act. And in all thy ways Acknowledge  
 God, and lean not to thy own under-  
 standing.



I. That the wicked ought to Reform.

## DISCOURSE XII.

*The Conversion of a Sinner.*

And that will Appear upon these Suggestions.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away  
from his Wickedness that he hath  
committed, and doth that which is  
lawful and right, he shall save his  
Soul alive.

**I**F we would be true to our great In-  
terest, and be wise for the great Con-  
cernments of our Souls; and secure them  
for Eternity; we must then put Evil  
from us, and Repent of what we  
have done amiss; we must Disclaim  
it, and Condemn our selves in it; we  
must be Reformed, and return to our  
Duty.

Dis. XII.

~~~~~

I say,

I. That the wicked *ought* to Reform.

II. That they *may*.

I. That the wicked *ought* to Reform.

And that will Appear upon these Suggestions.

First, *Sin* is contrary to Reason, Right, and Safety.

I. *Sin* is contrary to Reason.

This is the malignant and mischievous Nature of every sinful Action. It is in it self *Unreasonable*, contrary to all Wisdom, and Understanding: and you will easily grant, that what is against Reason ought not to be done at all; or if it be done, that it ought to be re- voked. We cannot say worse of a Man, than that he is an *Unreasonable* Per- son: nor worse of an Action, than that it is contrary to Reason. If a Man will hear no Reason, who will have to do with him? For he that will not hear Reason, will do no *Right*; and therefore

therefore what is done against Reason, *Dis. XH.* must be revoked, and disclaimed. For what is so done is done against Right, which is the Rule of all Actions. For Right is the Measure of all Motion; and the Law of Heaven. Right is so sacred a thing that even Poverty, Necessity, Calamity, and Misery, which make cases very pitiable, and compassionate; they are not considerable, in competition with Right; for so we read, *Lev. 19. 15. Thou shalt not countenance a Poor man, in his cause.* Be the Man Poor, or Rich, the Right of his Case, and nothing else, must be considered in Judgment.

2. A sinful Action is *Discredit*able to any Person whatsoever. It is said of the Sons of *Eli*, that by their wickedness, they *made themselves vile.* The higher any Man is in Place, the Greater he is in Power, the more eminent for Birth, and Dignity; the greater is his Fault, if he commit a Sinful Action. No Man whatsoever hath Credit enough, to countenance that which is wicked, and ought not to be done.

*1 Sam. 3.
13.
Omne animi
Vitium tan-
to conspe-
ctius in se
Crimen ha-
bet, quanto
major qui
peccat ha-
betur.*

3. It is Grievous, Painful, and Intolerable to bear the Effects of wicked and sinful Actions, and to vary from
X Right,

Vol. I.



Right, unless a Man disclaim, and revoke it, such Actions are very costly and dearly paid for. Though they promise Pleasure, for the present; yet they lay the Foundation of an Evil Conscience, and a disquieted and discontented Mind; and if they be not Repented of, we shall rue it to Eternity: And that, not only in respect of loss, but misery; which we cannot now express. For we know not what is meant by *Tophets Burning*, nor fully understand what is comprehended in those words of enduring the *Warm that dieth not, and the Fire that goeth not out*. Let no Man deceive himself; real Satisfaction, true Content must have a solid Foundation, a clear Conscience, honest Intention, Right Actions, an unblameable tenour and course of Life. And that is the first; the Malignancy and Naughtiness of every sinful Action, as being a Contradiction to Reason, against Right, the Agents Discredit, a Grievous, Painful, an Intolerable Thing.

Secondly, Being such, it cannot be Justified. For this is most certain, whatsoever is contrary to the Reason of the thing, or to the Right of the Case; is morally null and void, though it be done

done by any Person whatsoever, I say, *Dis. XII.*
Null as to the validity of the Thing; though not null and void as to the
 Mischief it doth to the Agent. It is
 without all Authority, and Right.
 For this power is not in God himself;
 Psal. 97. 7. *For his Throne is established*
in Righteousness. It is a principal Mis-
 carriage; so that a bad Man is not a
 Man of Power and Privilege, he is
 not a Man of Excellency; but he is,
 as a Man that is Deaf, Blind, or Lame;
 that is not Distinguished from other Men,
 by any Perfection; but by Impotency,
 and Deformity. As the *Palsy-motion*, *Hoc est Con-*
 which seems to be quicker than o- *cupiscentia*
 ther; but it is not from Strength but *in parte Ap-*
 from Weakness: no Man can Justify a *petitiva,*
 sinful Action, but to a bad Conscience, *quod est Pa-*
 or before an unrighteous Judg; who is *ralysis in*
 either Ignorant or Partial, or himself *parte motiva*
 as Bad; by undue Principles, corrupt *Bern,*
 Interest, or an Abuse of Power. For *Ad malum*
 it is not *to be Able*, for a Man to do that *non datur*
 which *ought not* to be done. *posse.*

Thirdly, Every sinful Action, howe-
 ver we may stand to it, or may be
 countenanced here in the World; will
 be Discountenanced sooner or later,
 whether We will or no. For it will

Vol. I. fall under Censure, and be brought to Judgment, and Condemned, and Punished. For Right shall finally Prevail: Things themselves will not long continue out of Order. Folly and Madneſs will at laſt be weary and aſhamed of themſelves: Beſides the Judgment of God, which will be according to Truth. *Rom. 2. 5. For God will bring to light the hidden works of darkneſs, &c.*

Fourthly, If we do not Repent of that which we have done ſinfully, it will lye upon us as the blackeſt Spot, as the heaviest Judgment, and as the worſt Malady. Men are ſenſible of Bodily Evils, but Mental are the heaviest. Moral Evil is the greateſt of all Evil; for it hath the baſeſt Symptoms, and moſt unhappy Conſequences, and the moſt frequent Twitches. For Moral Evil makes an internal Wound, a Wound in the Conſcience, where there is the quickeſt and tenderest Senſe. For all Bodily Evils, the Creatour of all things hath vouchſafed Remedies: But for the Evils of the Mind, for Wounds in the Conſcience, there is no Remedy, but the Motion of the Mind in the way of Repentance, and Application to the Blood of Chriſt for Expiation, and

Atone-

Atonement. *For a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 15. Dis. XII.

Now on the other side, if a Man doth Repent, he may be released; for Repentance doth alter the Case. For this is most certain, that those who are Finite and Fallible, if they do Fail or Miscarry; upon Repentance, may be restored to Favour; and if the Fault be repented of, it is morally made Null, and Void. And what we Repent of, God hath declared he will pardon. And if we repent, and disclaim, and God pardon; it is then, as if it had not been done. Then also the Goodness of God is rightly resented, and his Patience understood, and the Means of Grace are in their right Use; and those that were Spiritually Dead are quickened unto Life. For by sinful Actions, Men are said to be *Dead*, Dead in Trespasses and Sins: And St. Jude 12. hath it *Twice Dead*, once Dead by sinning against the Rule and Law of Right; and Dead again by continuing in Impenitency, Contumacy and Hardness of Heart.

Fifthly, There is no Expectation either of God's Pardon, or of Help from Him, but in the way of Repentance. For who can promise himself any thing

Vol. I. out of the Terms of the Covenant of
 Grace; viz. Repentance from all dead
 Acts. 20. 21. Works, Resolution of Obedience to
 God, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 Repentance is so indispensably Necessary,
 that he which hath once done a-
 miss; in respect of the Habit of the
 Mind, he doth it again and again, that
 doth not Repent. For he is the same
 Man; and Men act like themselves. You
 have a good form of Words, when
 Men are Furious, Spiteful, and Devilish;
 we tell them, that *They shew their Spirits*
 and it is very right.

I will now suggest to you two Places
 of Scripture, for the Proof of what
 I have said in this fifth particular, viz.
 That there is no Expectation of God's
 Pardon, or of Help from him, but in
 the way of Repentance. 2 Tim. 2. 25.
If God peradventure will give them repen-
tance to life. Which shews that there
 is great Hazard of their Repentance,
 who are wilful Opposers of the Truth;
 and that God will pardon them no
 other way, intimates this to us, That
 the Case is very hazardous, whether
 such as are wilful Opposers of the
 Truth, shall ever be brought to Re-
 pentance. The other place is Act. 8. 26.
 where

where the Apostle speaks to *Simon Magus*, **Dis. xii.**
Repent of this thy wickedness, if perhaps the
thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.

Which shews that his Sin was not Unpardonable, but that there was no possibility of Pardon without Repentance.

Sixthly and Lastly, We are all under Obligation to Repent, though there would no good come to us by it: For we are God's Creatures, and hold of Him; from whence it follows, that we ought to serve Him, and to do his Will, and to be at his Command. For He created us, and doth Maintain us; and this being our Tenure, we owe Duty and Observance to Him; and if we fail in our Duty to Him, in that Case, we ought to Deprecate his Displeasure, and to Condemn our selves. In that Case we owe humble Acknowledgments, and we are to Repent and Revoke what we have done Amiss. The Performance of Obedience and Duty to God, that is the *First* Right; but to Repent and ask Forgiveness, that is the *Second*. Now, that Repentance shall have a good Effect, and take place, *that* depends upon *Evangelical Revelation*: But the Obligation to Repentance, that is Natural. I should, in the use of So-

Vol. I.

her Reason, think, that if I had Failed and were Mistaken, and wanting in my Duty to God; that I ought to Humble my self before Him, acknowledge my Offence, and ask Him Pardon: and doing this, I should imagine (in the Use of Sober Reason) that God was Placable. But this Supposition is put out of all Doubt, and Question, by the Gospel; which gives us Assurance of Pardon, and Remission of Sin, if we do Repent and ask God Forgiveness, and renounce and disclaim what we have done Amiss. 'Tis true, we are obliged to Repent whether God will Pardon or not; because we Owe Duty and Obedience to God, as we are his Creatures; and if we do not Repent, we do, upon Account, sin again. For this take for granted; whosoever hath done Amiss, and doth not Repent of it, and revoke it, he Lives in that Sin that he hath committed. For he is in such a Frame and Disposition, that had he the like Occasion, and Temptation offered him, he would do it again. So that both *Nature*, and *Grace* do meet here, and shew the indispensable Necessity of Repentance, in Case of contracted Guilt, and a wounded Conscience.

But

But because I am to give you Encouragement; In the

DISC. XII.

II. Place I will hasten to *that*: And that which I shall say upon this Head is, to give you Assurances, that through the Grace, which God doth afford, and his Assistance of the Powers and Faculties of his Creatures; we *may* Repent of all Evil done, and make Application to God, and Deprecate his Displeasure, and Leave off to sin, and Return to our Duty, and so Obtain his Pardon. It is therefore advisable, that since we are, all along in this Life, in a State of Weakness, and Imperfection; that we be always in the Motion of Repentance, and Exercise of Faith in God, by Jesus Christ. And this Exhortation and Advice I ground upon the Word of God, which tells us, *That if the wicked Man turns from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

Neither let any Man say, that these Words signifie no more, than if one should say to an Impotent Man, Remove this Mountain, and thou shalt have such or such a Reward: Or to bid a Man to comprehend the Ocean in
the

Vol. I.

the Hollow of his Hand, and it shall so or so be done unto him. These are Ludicrous Ways of Speaking: and such as must not be put upon God, nor in any Case attributed unto him. God doth not mock and deride his poor Creatures, when he doth invite them to him. This were to Reproach one that were Impotent, to bid him come to him, whenas he knew he could not stir a step. Therefore when God saith to the Sinner, Repent and Turn from your Wickedness, and you shall save your Soul alive; it doth suppose, that either he is Able, or that he will make him so. It being Madnes and Folly to take in to Consideration, Things that are Impossible: all Motion towards such things is to no purpose.

But here some may be ready to Interpose, and Say: Surely God is not in good earnest, because he might if he would; for who can Resist the Divine Will? This is a considerable *Objection*, and doth require an *Answer*. For some Men put all upon God, and say when He please to come, with Irresistible Grace, the Work will be done; and the Man shall be Converted; for *who hath resisted his Will?* And till then, the Work

The Conversion of a Sinner.

315

Work will not be done, for they *Dis. XII.*
can do nothing. But to this I An-
swer.

It doth not follow, that because
God doth not *Inforce*, that therefore
he doth not *Enable*. That God should
Force, agrees neither with the Nature
of God, nor with the Nature of Man;
but that God should Inable, this is
natural to the Relation we stand in
to God, who is Original to our Be-
ing. And to make this out; this No-
tion is verified throughout the whole
Creation. For there is not to be found
in the whole Creation of God, in any
part of the World, any thing that is
a *Procurant* Cause, but is also a *Con-*
servant Cause, till the thing be settled
in a State of Sufficiency, and Substien-
cy. Even this dull *Earth* that we tread
upon doth maintain all the Plants that
do grow out of it. Take a view
of the *Irrational Creatures*; and you
shall find, that every Creature that is
Original to any thing, doth certainly
pursue its first Production, by after Con-
servancy, and ready Maintenance, and
never leave off, till it be settled in the
state of Sufficiency, and Able to subsist
of it self.

Now

Vol. I.

Now thus I argue: If this be an Impression of God upon all Creatures, and a Perfection which He hath placed in them, is not this much more in God? I therefore take this to be a certain Proposition; That he which doth give the first Being, gives farther Strength for continuance. But Force agrees not, either with the Nature of God, or with the Nature of Man.

(1.) It agrees not with the Nature of God. An Intellectual Agent, that hath all Knowledge and Power, useth neither Fraud nor Violence. This is the Necessity of those that are Indigent.

He that hath all Power, and all Wisdom, is never put upon the use either of Fraud or Force: This (as I said) belongs to Indigent Causes, and cannot be supposed of God, who is Infinite in Power, and Wisdom. Then,

(2.) It doth not agree with the Nature of Man. For such is the Nature of Man, that if He do not Mean and Consent, It is not reputed a Human Action; for nothing is a Human Act, but what proceeds from the Judgment of Reason, and the Liberty of the Will. We are always bound to make use of

out

our Reason, for our Guidance, and then **Dis. XII.**
to exercise Liberty in pursuance of the Dictates of our Mind. 'Tis true, in this compounded State of Flesh and Spirit; we are so addicted to satisfy the inferior Appetite, and so Averse to the Dictates of sober Reason, and the Guidance of the Divine Spirit; That had we any thing material to allege to the contrary, it would certainly make us let all alone, come of it what would. And this would be the greatest Discouragement in the World; If we could allege that we were Impotent, and Insufficient; and that though the Grace of God were absolutely necessary; yet we were not sure of it. 'Tis therefore necessary for us to Believe, that through the Grace, and Assistance of God, we may be Able, and that we shall not fail thereof. For God is present with us, and puts good Thoughts into our Mind, and will promote them into Execution; if we be not wanting to our selves. We are here in a State of Contest and Fight against great Variety of Enemies abroad; and there is Inclinations of the sensitive Powers within, and the Allurements and Provocations of Objects: and against all these it is too little, to Oppose Nature's Strength,
For

Vol. I.


For Nature is divided, Flesh and Spirit, and Flesh in Opposition to Spirit. Now the only Foundation of Certainty and Ground of Encouragement, is from the *Grace* and *Assistance* of God; and this we are assured of, if we duly apply our selves to God. For the infinite, wise and good God doth not call us to that, which he doth not Enable us to perform. This were to put that upon God, which neither Scripture, nor Reason doth allow. For this were in effect to say, That God had not a Mind we should do that, which he calls upon us to do; if he should withhold his *Grace*, *Help* and *Assistance*. For this God knows, that he is the First Cause, and that the Second can do nothing without the First, and that the First must Begin. For this is repugnant in it self, that a Second Cause should have the place of the First Cause; or be Self sufficient; this is contrary to the order of the Creation. Now if any Man should Arrogate to himself a Self-Sufficiency to do any thing, he would make himself the First Cause. Whereas, He neither is, nor can be the First Cause, nor Original. Therefore all good must Begin at God; and nothing

nothing that is Good, can be done Dis. XII.
without Him; and therefore he must
not only *Countenance*, but *Enable*; and
when We are Enabled, we may do that
for which he doth Enable us. We may
Hear the Voice of God, if God speaks
to us; and we may Obey and Comply
with his Motion. I will give you some
Instances in Scripture for this, *Isai. 41. 2.*
God there is said, *To call the Righteous
Man to his foot.* The Righteous Man
here spoken of was *Abraham*, whom
God called to follow him, Step by Step,
And the Apostle *Heb. 11.* gives us an
account of this in practice, who Obey-
ed God's call, and *went at his bidding,*
not knowing whither.

Another Instance you have of the
Disciples of our Saviour, of whom we
read that when our Saviour called them, Matt. 4. 18.
there was that Virtue, Power, and Suf-
ficiency in the Voice of our Saviour,
that they left their Relations, and Em-
ployments, and followed our Saviour,
without making any Question how they
should be maintained. The Inferiour
Creatures they have Obeyed God, con-
trary to the very Impressions upon their
Natures. The *Sun* hath left his Course, Josh. 10.
and stood still, at God's bidding: Fire 12, 13.
hath

Vol. I.



hath not burnt, and the Sea hath risen up in heaps, and the several Creatures though never so opposite in their Natures, one unto another, came in to the Ark; and though before they would have Destroy'd one another, yet being called by God, to go into the Ark, they became tame and harmless, So that not only Intelligent, but Inferior Agents, know how to obey God, if God appear. Much rather should Intelligent Agents, who are adapted to hear God's Voice, and to be guided by Reason, answer the call of God, when He speaks to them.

DIS-

331
Vol. I.
DISCOURSE XIII.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked Man turneth away
from his Wickedness that he hath
committed, and doth that which is
lawful and right, he shall save his
Soul alive.*

THESE are Words not in vain; Disc. XIII.
therefore they do suppose two
things.

I. That the Wicked *ought* to Reform.

And,

II. That they *may*.

I. They that have committed Wickedness *ought* to disclaim it, repent,
Y leave

Vol. I. leave off to sin, and return to their Duty.
 And,

II. That they *may*; else it might be replied to these Words; *God supposeth that which cannot be done*: and this every where passeth for an undeniable Answer. And to suppose this, is a Defect in any wise Agent: much more in the All-wise God, who never makes a vain shew. It is not only below Him, but unworthy of Him, to Deride Men in misery; when he calls upon them to Repent and Turn to Him. True indeed, if Men will not hear his voice, then He will *laugh at their destruction*, and *mock when their fear cometh upon them*. As therefore we may not make a mock of Sin, neither doth God mock at Sinners. But to make this out, that the wicked *may* turn from their wickedness.

In every Nature, there are Two things as the Provision of God's Creation, and its Security, *viz.*

1. A Principle of *Self-preservation*.
2. A motion of *Restitution* and Recovery.

1st. A Principle of *Self-preservation* in its true proper and natural State: from which, of it self it doth never depart;

part; but by the violence of other Agents, which it cannot resist; and therefore is sometimes driven from it self. This is the Account that some give of Storms, Tempests, Earthquakes, and the like. But Natures motion is orderly and leisurely; as the several Seasons of the Year, that follow one another: where the former give place unto the latter. This is the first Principle in Nature: And the

2d. Is a power of *Recovery*, and Self-Restoration, when that which did disturb is taken off. Thence it is, that we expect fair weather after foul; serene, after stormy; and clear, after Clouds. This is an Observation from the State of the Creation, Things without us or about us.

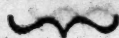
Now, is there any Perfection in the *lower Nature*, that is not in the *higher*? Therefore we are to suppose that this is eminently in superiour Nature. Now to bring this Observation home to our purpose. To a moral Agent, such as Man is; he being endowed with Reason and Understanding, and invested with Liberty and Freedom; nothing is more Unnatural than Sin and Wickedness. For it is

Y 2 against

Vol. I. against the Reason of our Miud, and
against the Reason of the Thing. It
is a Contradiction to the *Reason of our
Mind*, which is our Governour; that
which guides the Actions of our Will:
and to the *Reason of Things*, which
gives Law, and is the rule of Action:
And wickedness is a great contradiction
to both. Wickedness in Man is as Mon-
strous and unnatural, as Darknes in
the Sun, which is the Luminary of the
World: Wickedness is such a thing as
Filth in the Water; as Infection in the
Air: Wickedness is such a thing as
a Disease in the Constitution of Nature,
and we say Nature is every Man's best
Physician. What are Agues and Feavers,
but Nature charged with an Enemy
that tends to its dissolution, and there-
fore labours to shake it off? And there-
fore Physicians endeavour to help and
assist Nature, and put her into motion;
by which, she will discharge her self
of all malignant and offensive matter.
Now, I say, shall Nature recover, and
shall not Grace superadded to Nature,
do the like? we use to say of all Habits
joyned to natural Powers, that they
do Facilitate; and we easily do that,
which we do by the help of acquired
Habits.

Habits. Now the first thing in Rational Nature, is not at all to Vary from the Rule of Right: and this would be to answer the constitution of God's Creation, in Man. But in case he fails: here, in the second place, is the Motion of Repentance; and herein lyes our double Security, Safety and Perfection. It is therefore highly necessary, that we be always in a disposition towards Repentance, and free to the exercise of Faith in God, by Jesus Christ: that so the Guilt of no Sin may lye upon our Consciences: for this is the Motion of Recovery, in humane Nature.

So that now put the Case of us Men, as we find it. Our Consciences will tell us, that we have done amiss, by departing from the Rule of Right; and by consenting to Iniquity: for Guilt is burthensome to the Mind, and will be a wound in our Spirits. Now if the *first*, which is best, fail, viz. our *Innocence*, and *Integrity*, wherewith we were invested in the moment of our Creation: Let us betake our selves to the *second*, the motion of *Repentance*; which is for our Recovery, and is the grace of the Gospel: and in so doing, there will be hope, as we read *Ezra* 10. 2. And

Vol. I.  let us not lose our selves, by adding iniquity to our Sin, or by Despair after Guilt contracted. For a second Sin, is not only another of the same kind, but the Consummation of the former: Insomuch, that he is reputed to do the same evil once again, that he hath once done, and doth not Repent of it. Let us not live in a Lye, flatter our selves with that which will not profit: for there are in Man many lying Refuges, and foolish Boastings, and vain Glory. The Apostle tells us of some, that *glory in their shame*; that do Applaud themselves, as if they were not under the Obligation of Judgment, and Conscience; but were free to do any thing, that is either pleasureable, or profitable, or expedient for their purpose, or what they have a mind to do. For of some we say, there is *no fear of God before their eyes*; no Reverence of the Deity in their Minds, but are free to their ungoverned Wills, and to their Lusts. whereas this is worthy of Humane Nature; to overcome a Man's own Will, and to bridle his Lusts. For, *Will is no Rule*, nor can justify any thing; and Lusts are very importunate, *Jan. 4. 1. Whence come wars and fightings? come they*
not

not hence, even from your Lusts that war in the Soul? Whereas he that ruleth his own Spirit, doth a greater Act than he which taketh a City: Nothing is the true Improvement of the Rational Faculties, but the exercise of the several Virtues, of Sobriety, Temperance, Chastity, Modesty, Gentleness, Humility, Obedience in all things to God, and Charity and good will to Men. These are Acts of Excellency, these are indeed Acts of Power: by these the Minds of Men are Regulated, and Refined, discharged of Fury, Rage and exorbitant Passions. By these a Man is made to act like himself: whereas, without these; a Man acts like a Person in a Frensy, Distracted and Mad, like Savage People, or like Beasts of prey, that worry and destroy one another: whereas by moderate Use of the Conveniences of Nature; by Modesty, Humility, Gentleness; by Patience and Obedience to God; by Charity, Love, and good will towards Men, a Man is Qualified for the Enjoyment of God, and reconciled to the Law of Heaven, the Rule of Righteousness; and fitted for attendance upon God in the other State, and to enjoy Him for ever.

Disc. XIII.

Pro. 16.32.

Vol. I.

--Ingenuas
didicisse
fideliter
Artes,
Emollit
mores, nec
sinit esse
feros. Ovid.

Now, if it may be said of Common Education, viz, of Learning, and the Study of the *Liberal Sciences*, That it doth qualify and calm the Minds of Men, and bring them to Gentleness and Sobriety; upon which Supposition the Roman Emperours that were such great Warriours, did forbid the Study of Philosophy, because it spoiled Men for Soldiers: I say, if this be true of common Education, how much more of *Christian Graces*, by which we are taught to Imitate Christ, who was Meek, and Lowly in Spirit. 'Tis in the exercise of these Vertues, that a Man shews his Strength and Valour, above the inferior Creation. Whereas on the contrary, by Envy, Wrath, Pride, and Haughtiness, Men become Devilish: But by doing Good, Men resemble God. By the several Vertues, the Mind is Purified, and made fit to converse with God, and to receive from Him: and therefore it is said by the Prophet, Isa. 1 16, 18. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now let us Reason together saith the Lord.* Wherefore, I say with the Apostle Eph. 5. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest,*
and

and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Life. Disc. XIII
Awake all you that have fallen asleep, in the Security of sinful Pleasures, and through Neglect of God, and your Duty: and this is my Argument; and the Force of my Exhortation; *Christ is ready to give you Life.*

And if I had not good Warrant to say this, there would be no Force in my Exhortation; and I should then labour in vain. Whereas being satisfied, that *God is in this Exhortation*, and ready to Assist all good endeavours with his Aid, Help, and Assistance; This gives great Encouragement, and speaks to all Points, and answers all Objections to the contrary. Here is then an Exhortation in the *name of God*; otherwise were it only the voice of a Man, it would produce no good effect.

But this I take for granted, that where there is Monitions and Warning from God, in case of Danger; that there, the Man *is Able*, or that God is ready to *make him so*. And if you do not suppose this, all those Exhortations in Scripture, for Men to leave their Sins, and to Repent, and turn to God, which are so frequent, are to no purpose, unless Men be Able, or that God is ready by

Vol. I. by his Grace to make them so. I say,  all those Exhortations do suppose necessary Aid and Assistance. And the Apostle, *Heb. 4. 16.* hath an excellent form of words to this purpose, though it be not so plain in our Translation; for we read it, *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need:* whereas in the Original it is, *Grace for a necessary supply.*

Εἰς δὲ χά-
ριν βοή-
θειαν.

Now this is all that I have aimed at, to prove; not only, that, God is ready to receive us, if we Repent and turn unto him; but also willing to Aid and Assist us. Therefore depend upon this, as that which you may Trust unto; for without this, neither our Religion nor our Safety have any great Security: If God, for his part, be not willing and ready to afford necessary Aid and Assistance. But that you may believe this, I can give you all the assurance of Reason and Scripture. Yea, Survey the *whole Creation* of God, and you shall find, that God hath provided for all necessary Effects. Hath he not secured the World, for Light, and Heat, by the Sun? doth the Sun fail, after so many thousand Years, to give Light and

and Warmth ; any more than it did at first? This is the promise of God, to secure the necessary Effect to the preservation of the several Creatures. Hath not God provided the Clouds of Heaven to drop down Fatness, and to send rain to wet the Earth, that otherwise would be spoiled with heat and dust? I might run through the whole Creation, and shew how Every thing is fitted for our Use, and to secure the Effects that are necessary and proper for us.

But I go on. No considerate mind, that is privy to its own Slipperiness, dare be self-confident. He that is sensible of his own Irresolution, and sudden surprisal through Temptation; together with his Weakness; is so far from being self-confident, or from Trusting to his own Strength; that if he should Leave God out, he would soon give over and sink down into Despair; and not think himself sufficient to manage so great an Affair, as the Things of Reason, and the Transactions of Time, and Preparations for Eternity. We are always to understand, and to remember, that we are but second Causes, and have sufficiency only in God,

Vol. I. God, who is First, and Principal in every thing that Good is; and if God be with us, we are enabled.

Wherefore be Resolved in this Matter, that *God is with us*, and that he is ready to afford his Grace and Assistance. And this is a thing of Universal Acknowledgment. For all sober and considerate Men, when they do engage in any thing considerable, they say, *In the Name of God*; and when they part one with another, they say, *God be with you*. Let us therefore in every thing, Begin with God, which is to follow the Direction of our Blessed Saviour, *Luk. 14. 28.* Who saith, *which of you intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Or who is he that will go forth to war against a great and potent Enemy, that doth not first sit down and consider, whether he be able to meet him.*

Now that you may not lose this great Argument, and Principle of Reformation, and true and solid Ground of Encouragement, to leave off to sin, and to return to God, because of his Gracious Aid and Assistance; I will give you Assurance farther, by these six Particulars.

1. It was *never* God's Intention when Disc. XIII.
He made Man at first, to put him in-
to a State of Absolute *Independency*, or
Self-Sufficiency. And therefore whoso-
ever assumes it to himself, doth assume
that, which never did belong to a Crea-
ture-State. God always did intend, that
his Creature should *Depend* upon Him,
and hold of Him: For Man was made
but in the place and order of a Second
Cause, and a Second Cause is no Cause
divided from the First. Therefore it
was always the Report of Wisdom,
Acknowledge God in all thy ways; and Prov. 3. 5.
lean not to thine own understanding. This
was a Duty of *Adam* in Paradise; even
while he continued in Innocency; be-
fore ever he meddled with the forbid-
den Fruit; and he miscarried, because
he did forget his Dependence upon
God, and withdrew himself from him.
Those Words of the Psalmist, *Pf. 37. 5.*
Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust al-
so in Him; are not Directions only for
this lapsed State: these are Directions
suitable and connatural to the very First
Institution of God. As also that of
the Prophet, *Isai. 50. 10. Trust in the*
Lord, and stay thy self upon thy God,
and as he there goes on most excellently,

Vol. I.

v. II. Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass your selves about with sparks that you have kindled, but this shall you have at my hand, ye shall lye down in sorrow. They are sure enough to fail and be disappointed in their Undertaking, be it never so good, they will end in Sorrow, and Shame, if they do not Begin with God, and look up to him, as the only Self-sufficient Cause. For alas! none of us are Wise enough for our own Direction, in any of the ordinary Affairs of Life, or Able enough for our own Defence: We do not see before us, nor understand what Evils may befall us. If we walk in the Streets, we are not sure of one another; for he that despises God or the Laws, may be Master of any Man's Life. So that if we leave out God, or God be neglected, we shall be frustrated and disappointed; and then we may justly reflect upon our own Presumption and Folly. For we went out in our own Strength, and God was not in all our Thoughts; and therefore he doth not give Issue and Success. This was the State of the Creation, the Creatures Reference to God, and the Creators Influence upon the Creature, and Communication of himself

himself to him. And that which was not in the State of Innocence, cannot be supposed to be in the State of Weakness, and contracted Impotency and Debility. Yea, to tell you of a Self-sufficient Creature, is a contradiction in Subjecto; for all things derive from their Original, and Refer thereunto. As Solomon hath observed, *the place from whence the Waters come, thither they do return.* This is a Reason beyond all contradiction. I could Triumph in this Argument; 'tis without all possibility of answer or evasion. Therefore there is an absolute Insufficiency in every Second Cause; and what is a Second Cause, is applied without effect, when the First Cause is absent, or doth not move. This is the First. But,

2. Could Man alledge either Necessity of Evil, or Impossibility of doing Good, it would be a Plea, when God calls us to an Account, and admits us to Reason with him. For the Scripture tells us, that God doth do so, not only at the *day of Judgment*, but even *now*; and every one hath heard the Voice of God calling upon him, to give a Reason of his Actions. *Come now* (saith the Prophet in the Name of God)

Disc. XIII.

*Bonus Vir
sine Deo ne-
mo est. Sen.
Nulla sine
Deo Mens
bona est.
Sen. Ep.*

Eccl. I. 7.

Vol. I.

Isai. 1. 18.

Isai. 5. 4.

God) *let us Reason together*, and Argue the Case, and I will let you Judge between me and your selves, *What could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done?* But what have you done answerable? But if Sin were Necessary, it could not be avoided; and if a Man's Duty were impossible, it could not be done; this would be an Answer to God himself. But, that there is no Necessity of Evil, or any Impossibility of doing Good, and becoming Vertuous; I will shew you from that Passage of our Saviour, *Matth. 12. 41.* who saith to that wicked Generation, *That if the mighty works that had been done among them, had been done in Tyre and Sydon, they would have repented.* Which shews, that there was no impossibility in the Matter, but that it might have been done; otherwise this Speech of our Saviour had been Vain, and to no purpose. Upon this account it is, that we read, *Jude 15.* That at the day of Judgment God will *convince all the ungodly*, and Challenge them for *all their hard Speeches*, and *ungodly deeds*, *that they have committed*; and shew, that they had no reason, either to speak or think hardly of Him, so that

if

if this could be made out, that it were ^{disa xiii} absolutely impossible to avoid Evil, and to do Good, and discharge our Duty; *this* would be an Answer to the Indictment, that might be brought against us at the last day of Judgment. For *necessaries* cannot be otherwise than they are; nor that which is *impossible*, otherwise than it is. So that before any Judgment of Condemnation pass from a Righteous Judge; it must appear, that neither any one was necessarily Wicked; nor was it impossible, to have been Virtuous. Therefore these things will appear otherwise, or Men will not Condemn themselves, nor justify God in his Dealings. And doth not our Saviour plainly intimate this, when He tells you, that *Coraizin* and *Bethsaida*; as they *ought* to have repented, so they *might* have done it; and others *would* have done it, upon the like means, as hath been already said. It is true of Sinners, what *Saul* said of himself, 1 Sam. 13. 12. *I forced my self*; when he did that which he ought not to have done. So it will be found of all Sinners, that they have done that which was *Unnatural* and against the Reason of their Minds; which had they followed,

Vol. I. lowed, they would not have been
 Wicked.

Thirdly, Where there is *Excellency of Nature*, there is always Readiness to communicate, supply and gratifie. We commonly say, 'tis *not Majesty without Goodness*: All Excellency is easie to give Allowance, to shew Grace and Favour.

*Primus est
 Deorum
 cultus, Deos
 credere; de-
 inde reddere
 illis Maje-
 statem su-
 am, reddere
 Bonitatem,
 sine qua
 nulla est
 Majestas.
 Sen. Ep. 95.*

A good disposed Man, saith *Aristotle*, is ready to make a candid Interpretation, and overlook an Injury; and it is more generous *not to take cognizance* of a Fault, than to Forgive. It is *God-like* to Pardon, to Gratifie, to do Good. In Case of Misery, it belongs to Goodness, to make a Supply. They think meanly of God, that think he doth less to recover his Creature, than doth consist with Infinite Clemency and Compassion; that God doth less than what might serve the turn, or that he is wanting in Necessaries, to save his Creatures Harmless, or bring them to Good. This I depend upon, in a way of Reason; that infinite Goodness will not do less than is necessary, or than will serve the turn. But then, as Reason speaks, so also doth God speak of himself, by those Impressions he hath made of himself, upon all
 Creatures.

Creatures: For all Creatures that are Disc. XIII
Original to any other, they have this
in them, to take care of their Young,
and to watch over them, till they are
able to make their own Defence and
Supply. This is true throughout the
whole Creation of God; and hear what
God hath said of himself, *Psal. 145. 9.*
God is good to all: and his tender mer-
cies are over all his works. Therefore
I will rather think, *That God did*
not make the World, than that He will
fail to be very good unto the Creatures
that he hath made. For I see it other-
where quite otherwise.

Farthermore, we find good Affection
every where Recommended, and the
contrary every where Blamed and Dis-
paraged. We admire Goodness, Ten-
derness, and Compassion; but on the
contrary, every body complains of En-
vy, Malice, Hard Heartedness, Cruelty.
We therefore may be sure, that Good-
ness cannot be wanting in God, the
want whereof God blames in his Crea-
tures;

Fourthly, We cannot say worse of God,
than that his Calls and Monitions to
his Creatures, are not serious, and in
good earnest, and out of Love and good

Vol. I. Mind. I can make no other Explication of that Distinction of God's *Secret and Revealed Will*, but that they do declare the self *same Will* in God; but it is his Secret Will before he hath declared it: and his revealed Will, when he hath made it known. Just as the Secrets of a Man, knoweth no Man, but himself, and he to whom he will reveal them: So the Will of God is not known, till God himself declare it. For to speak of a Secret and a Revealed Will in God, contrary one unto another, is without Warrant, for it is the *same Will in another State*. And this I am well assured and resolved of, because this would be Dishonesty here below, in the very Judgment of Reason, to Pretend and not to Intend; to make a Shew and Overture, and to resolve in a Man's Mind the contrary; is a great Dishonesty, in the Judgment of Reason. And we have no other Principle to discern the Nature of God by, than the Light of Reason; and therefore the Prophet saith, *Isai. 46. 8. Shew your selves to be Men*; that is, use your Reason: and he speaks it in this case, of judging in the ways and things of God. *To whom*, saith He,
will

will you liken me, and make me equal? Disc. XIII.

Will you compare me with your Idols? that are made of Silver and Gold, and carried upon Mens Shoulders, and set in a place from whence they cannot remove; and though one cry unto them yet cannot they answer, nor save themselves out of trouble. *Remember this, and shew your selves Men, bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.* Wherefore we cannot think that to be a Perfection above, which is base and an Imperfection below. For those things that are true, are eternal Truths, always were so, and will be so immutably and unalterably. And upon this account, it is very hard to think of God, that He will not contribute that which is Necessary to his Creature, to do that which he calls him unto; especially in such things, where the Creature is Undone, if the thing be not done; and where none else but God can do it, nor help any otherwhere to be found. In such case how can we make it out, which is declared of God; *that He would not the death of a Sinner*; if he do not that which is necessary, to bring him to Repentance and unto Life? We are told, *Wisd. 11. 24.* that *He*

Vol. I.

hateth nothing that he made; but is the Lover of Souls. And therefore he cannot be wanting in Necessaries, to save them harmless, and to bring them to Good. And this Acknowledgment is made in our Publick Prayers: And upon this account it is, that we are advised, to cast away our transgressions, and to make us clean hearts; and thus expostulated withal, for why will you dye? Ezek. 18. 31-32, 11-36, 33. &c. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should dye, or in the death of him that dyeth? wherefore turn and live. And it is very observable, that he which Bids us do these Works, hath also Promised, that he will work them in us, Ezek. 36. 26. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; and a new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit upon you, Jer. 32. 39. and Heb. 8. 10. Now these Places are very easily Reconciled, by acknowledging God's Superintendency, as the Original and First Cause; and Men's Labour, Care, and Diligence, as a Second Cause. So that it may be said, that Man doth it, as we attribute an Effect to an Instrument; and it must be acknowledged, that God doth it, because He is Chief and

and Principal. We read *Jonah* 4. 2. Disc. XIII.
 That God is said to be a God of great
 pity: and elsewhere, we read that he
 Delighteth in Mercy; and what Persons
 Delight in, they do easily and readily.
 Farther, let it be considered, that the
 Fault is laid upon us, and we are charg-
 ed with carelesness and self-neglect, if
 the thing be not done. *Prov.* 1. 31. *I*
have called, but ye refused, and would have
none of my Counsels. So *Hosea* 13. 9. *O*
Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self: and
Joh. 6. 40. *ye will not come to me, that*
ye might have Life. This is the fourth
 particular.

...Principal. We read it with a great
...God is said to be a God of great
...and otherwise, we read that the
...and what persons
...in their do easily and readily.
...let it be considered, that the
...and we are charg-
...and ill-neglected. It
...from a great
...and would have
...so Hester 13. 2. 0
...the life and
...to me, that
...This is the story

Dis

DISCOURSE XIV.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

F*ifthly*, To Assert our Impotency Disc. XIV. and Disability, and that God is wanting in necessary Assistance, is to expose us to an invincible Temptation; and that in these three particulars.

1st. To entertain *hard Thoughts of God*; and such as are unworthy of Him.

2^{ly}. To *throw off the Use of all Means*; and to take no Care at all in this great Affair.

3^{ly}.

Vol. I.



3ly. Finally, to *Despair*. And we wrong God more by Desperation than by Presumption. I say, to Assert our Inability, and that God is wanting in necessary Aid and Assistance, would be to Expose us to think the *hardest Thoughts*, imaginable of God; even so far, as to neglect and throw off the Use of all *Means*, and to final Desperation. For, what are Means if the End be not attained by them? Means are not valuable for themselves, nor will any body be at the charge of them, but in respect of the End. And whose Heart will serve him to Act, when he hath no manner of Hope? and who can have any Hope if he have no Confidence, that God will Aid and Assist? I add farther; to think that God is Implacable, and Irreconcilable, is the way to come unto the very Temper of the Devils themselves. But that God is ready with his Grace, and Influence; is that which hath an universal Acknowledgment; as appears from these three things.

1st. There is not a Man among us of any Sense and Reason, that will Engage in any matter of weight, but he will say, *In the Name of God*,

2ly.

2ly. There is no Man of any Sobriety, if he Relate how he hath escaped any danger; but he will interpose these words, *God be thanked,* Or, *as God would have it.* Diff. XIV.

3ly. All Men of Consideration, and Sobriety; when they part, will say, *God be with you.* Which Observations import, that it is suitable, and connatural to the Nature of Man, to Apply to God; and to acknowledge him, and to think that God will be with us, to Assist and direct us.

Sixthly and Lastly, God hath done so much on His part, that he hath given us all Reason to believe, and think that He is well-minded towards us: and that he is resolved in the matter of our Recovery; upon Terms, that are made easy, and possible. And to make this appear I will offer you these Eight Particulars.

First, Take into Consideration, the length of God's *Patience*: For were God for our Destruction, he would take us at the first advantage, and opportunity: as Enemies are wont to do. For who lets an Enemy go out of his Hand? Men will hardly suffer an Enemy to live; but prevail against him
what

Vol. I.  what they can; lest, if they should let him go out of their Hand, and let him alone, he should meditate their Destruction. And this is that, which is apparent; and the Scripture supposes it, *Eccl. 8. 7. Because sentence against an Evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the Sons of Men are set in them to do Evil.* But 2 Pet. 3. 9. we are told, that *the Long Suffering of God* doth not proceed either from his Weakness, or want of Power, but from his *Willingness that we should not perish.* He would have us come to a better understanding, and take a course that we might live. This is the first thing that I would suggest, that God is well-minded towards us, and willing to do us good. The *Second* thing that I would offer, is, *The checks of our own Consciences.* Now the checks of our own Consciences, in all bad ways, we have very great cause to attribute them unto God, as his Awakenings of us. And that for this reason, because sinning doth contract Hardness and Reprobacy of Mind; and disables the Mind for its true and proper work; and makes it as Salt that hath lost its Savour. *We all find it far easier, to com-*
mit

mit a second Sin than the first. Therefore Disc. XIV.
we are to look upon the check of our
own Consciences as the voice of God.

Thirdly, The abundant Provision,
that God hath made for our Recovery;
shews that he is in good earnest. There
is *Expiation* of Sin; and the Assistance
of his Grace and Spirit, for the recover-
ing of us; and God would not have
done all this, if he had not been in
good earnest. Here I will take up the
Argument of *Manoah's Wife*, *Judges* 13.
22. *we shall surely dye* (said he) *because*
we have seen God. But his Wife said
unto him, v. 23. *If the Lord were pleased*
to kill us, he would not have received a
burnt-offering at our hand, nor shewn us
such things as he hath done. 'Tis not
reasonable to think, that God having
made a large Provision for our Relief
and Recovery; that he should lay a
Restraint upon the Sovereign Vertue
of that, which is his own Remedy; but
suffer it to grapple with the Malignancy
of the Distemper, though it extend
never so far. So that, if a good Effect
doth not follow, it is not because God
hath been Wanting on his part; nor
because he hath not done that which
lay upon him to do. If such a Remedy
prove

Vol. I. prove ineffectual, it must be from some other cause, *viz.* from some Obstacle, or Impediment, or want of due Application: or because of the Persons Impatience under cure, or because things are allowed and delighted in, that are of a contrary Nature, and Quality: And not for want of Good will, in the all-wise God. For the means that God useth, are in themselves sufficient; and in case they prove without effect; 'tis because they are not followed.

Men fall short in their Repentance because after Men have been Sorrowful, they return again to their former Iniquities. Whereas upon Repentance there should follow Works meet for Repentance, Mat. 3. 8. 'Tis an excellent saying that which you find in Eccles 34. 26. *He that washeth himself because he hath touched a dead body, and goeth and toucheth it again, what doth his washing profit him? So he that humbleth himself for his Sins and doth the same things again, what doth his humbling profit him?*

So again, for Faith, which is another Remedy of God's Provision: for he saith, *He that Believeth shall be Saved.* Now what doth a Man's Faith signifie,

if a Man Profess to believe; if he do not Dis. XIV.
do those things which naturally follow
upon such a Belief; or as they do, who
do really and truly Believe? What pro-
fit can a Man expect from such an empty
and insignificant Faith, as St. James speaks,
Jam. 2. 14. can such a Faith save him?
Who will think that a Man doth believe,
who doth things clear contrary to that
which he saith he believes? Again,
What come the Offers of Grace unto,
which shew the Favour of God towards
Sinners; if they be not Closed with, or
if Men *Receive the grace of God in vain?*
What doth all this signifie, if that com-
plaint of the Prophet may be taken up,
that we have laboured in vain, and spent
our strength in vain. To what purpose
are those Prophets sent by God, *that rise*
up early, and sit up late, if Men incline
not their Ears, and will not listen? *Jer.*
23. 4. Then in respect of the Sinners
State and Condition; can He be other-
wise than extremely Miserable, that is
not cured of the Rancor and Venom
that the Practice of Iniquity hath poi-
soned his Spirit withal? For, Misery a-
risseth from within; 'tis not by any Im-
position from the Effects of any Power
without us: But a Man is miserable from
his

Vol. I.



his own inward Malignity and naughty Disposition. So that if a Man be not Cured by all the Remedies that are applied; he is not healed of the Wound that Guilt and Sin hath made in his Conscience; which are the true productive Cause of his Malady and Distemper. And if this Effect be not wrought, it is because the Patient is Refractory and Stubborn. And that is the third thing, *viz.* those *Provisions* that God hath made, which are worthy, honourable, noble, available and effectual, if we do not obstruct and hinder; but are patient under God's Cure, and Application of the Remedy. The

Fourth thing that I shall instance in, is the *Nature and Quality of the Things* that God, upon account of Religion, does require of us, *viz.* Those things whereof Religion doth consist: and they are internal good Dispositions, and Acts that are suitable, and do of their own accord follow. I say, an *Internal good Disposition*, and such Acts as are suitable, and connatural thereunto, and follow of their own accord. For by our Carriage and Behaviour, by our Words and Speech, we shew our Mind and Temper; by what we do, and practise. In our
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Disc. XIV

A a

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Vol. I.



are Good in themselves; and do Sanctifie and Purifie our Minds, and make us Right and Sound, and such as we ought to be. I might instance in all the Acts required by the Christian Religion, and make it good of every one of them; which cannot be said of positive Institution, such as was the Prohibition to *Adam* and *Eve*, *Gen. 2. 17. Not to eat of such a Tree.* Neither do we take notice of any such Prohibition in the Gospel: but what we find pleasurable or convenient, *1 Cor. 10. 25, 27. we eat, asking no question for Conscience sake.* Also those Prohibitions that were under the *Levitical Law*, for neglect wherof, the Sons of *Aaron* were so punished, as also *Uzzah*, for touching the Ark; though with a good Mind, to keep it from falling; and the *Bethshemites* for looking into it. There are now no such things required, so hazardous and dangerous: for such things Men had not the Security of their Minds, but their Security lay only in their *Memories*, and not in the Rectitude of their *Temper.* Whereas we have the Security of our Temper, because those things that are forbidden, are Base and Unworthy. So that when Evil is presented

ted to us, we presently give an Answer, *Disc. XIV.*
How can I do this wickedness, and sin a-
gainst God? And out of a Sense of the
 Impurity of the thing, we presently
 Object against it. Whereas they had
 only the security of their Memories,
 which is a frail, and fallible Faculty;
 for we are apt to forget, and do not
 often think. And this we find, that it
 is far harder for Intellectual Nature to
 do a thing where we see no Reason
 for it, or to forbear any thing, if we
 do not see any Reason why; especi-
 ally if it be against our Way and Tem-
 per. But in the Christian Religion,
 those things that are Commanded, are
 regular and kindly, because our Minds
 are cast into the same Mould with them,
 and framed into Suitableness and Con-
 formity with them: So that we act
 our selves, without any great Confide-
 ration; we are ready to make Applica-
 tion to God, and to place all Affiance
 and Confidence in him; and to do all
 Acts of Righteousness and Justice; and
 to govern our selves according to the
 Rules of Sobriety and Temperance;
 because we are reconciled in Nature and
 Temper, to all these things: So that it
 is an easie thing to be Religious, upon
 A a 2 the

Vol. I. the Terms of Christianity. We worship
 ~~~~~ God readily, because we are in Tem-  
 per, God-like, according to our Measure  
 and Degree. Seneca saith, " if a Man  
*Vis Deos propitiare ?* " would be holy and righteous, let him  
*Bonus esto.* " imitate God; and if a Man do par-  
*Satis illos coluit, quis-* " take of God, he is such, and will  
*quis imita-* " be such. But why should I quote  
*ture est. Sen.* the Philosopher, since the Apostle saith,  
*Ep. 95.* we partake of the divine nature, by a Prin-  
 ciple of Holiness and Righteousness,  
 2 Pet. 2. 4. This is the Fourth thing,  
 the Nature and Quality of those things  
 that God doth require of us.

Fifthly, The equal Consideration that  
 we meet with at the Hands of God,  
 in respect of our present Weakness;  
 shews that God is ready and willing  
 to do us good. And to make this out,  
 I say, that if any Man suffer Difficulty, in  
 the discharge of his Duty, (as I must con-  
 fess several Tempers do, more or less,  
 as to particular Vertues: to some Tem-  
 pers, such acts of Vertue, are very easie,  
 that to others are more hard and diffi-  
 cult: Now in this Disparity,) if by Con-  
 sideration, Reason and Argument a  
 Man bring himself to that which is  
 to be done; God accepts it the rather  
 as an act of high Vertue, and true Good-  
 ness



ness. And the more of Difficulty a Man finds in himself, God looks upon it as done with more Resolution; and he will not reject it, because the Man suffered *Difficulty*; but look upon it as the more *eminently Vertuous*; notwithstanding such Indisposition and Avocation. Now this is the fairest Measure imaginable: God doth make Allowance for our Temper, Complexion, and Constitution; for our Prejudices from our Education, and Suppositions upon Mistakes, and for our former Converse and Acquaintance, which many times doth occasion some Difficulty in the Discharge of our Duty. For *he considers our frame, and as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him*, Psal. 103. 13. And this is a great Encouragement to us, that we shall meet with all fair Construction; and that we are upon good Terms with God. And as this is for our Encouragement, so doth it declare God's gracious Intentions towards us, and that He is in good earnest desirous to do us good, and that He will not be Severe with us. That He will neither neglect nor refuse any Good in us; for He will not destroy any thing that par-

Vol. I. takes of his own Nature ; but will foster and cherish any thing that is God-like. And for our Mistakes, so our Hearts be Right, God will mend them, by his own candid Construction, and gracious Interpretation. And this Measure *Abimelech* found, *Gen. 20. 6. I know that thou didst it in the integrity of thy Heart.* Though he was to blame in the matter, yet because he was right in the main, God overlooks his Fault. For, if we do not consent, the Action is not reckoned as ours. As on the one Hand, it is no Vertue to do well without an Intention: So on the other, 'tis not reckoned as our Sin, if we fail through Mistake. I add to this, that there is great Congruity between our own Being, and the Nature of Things enjoyned by Religion. The Apostle saith, *Rom. 7. 15. I consent to the Law that it is good:* Here is the Congruity of the Agent and the Object. And *David* saith, *Psal. 119. 142. Thy Law is Truth:* That is, it is such as it should be. *David* was reconciled in Temper, to the Law of God. To the same degree that we are endued with *Holiness*, to the same degree we are possess of *Happiness*. The Mind is the Man, in respect of the Excellency

lency of the Part; for Mind is ten thousand to one above Body; And also, in respect of the *Act* that is performed; what is done with the consent of the Mind is best done. What Men do against their Minds, is of no Value, though the thing done be Good in it self; nor of any deep Malignity, if done with a good Mind, though through Mistake. Not only the gracious God, but all good Men go by this Rule; they do not value things as they are *materially* considered, but by the *Mind* and *Intention* of the Party; not that which is done, but what was *meant* and intended. If it prove an Injury, a good Man will accept of the good Intention; and that is the *Fifth* Particular.

Disc. XIV.

*Sixthly.* Though God begin with less, He *will go on* with more. For this I dare say, if a Man be Serious in his Religion, and duly sensible of his own Vanity and Insufficiency; and of the many Avocations, and Temptations from abroad; the Grace of God will not be short. Though God doth not give all at first, yet that which God Begins withal, is Sufficient for something, in the way of Conversion; and thereby



Vol. I. Man is Enabled to do that for which  
 ~~~~~ that Assistance is given. And that being  
 made use of; God, of his own Grace
 and good Will, will give *more*. And
 this we are well assured of by those
 words of our Saviour, *Mark 4. 25. To*
him that hath shall be given, (That is,
that hath by Use, and Improvement;)
but from him that hath not (that is,
that doth not make Use of what God
hath given him) shall be taken away,
even that which he hath. But this is most
 certain that *God doth never forsake us first.*
 That good will of God which did in-
 cline him to Begin with us, when we
 were in a way of Sin; will move him
 to go on after he hath begun. For we
 find in Scripture, that God often *makes*
himself, an Argument to himself. *Ezek. 37.*
35. For my own name sake I will do this.
So Isa. 43. 25. I even I am he that blot-
teth out thy transgressions for my own
names sake. God here proposeth him-
 self, for an Argument to himself; and
 brings this as an Argument for a *far-*
ther Act, because of his own Grace and
 Goodness he had begun. For he will
 not begin, and leave off upon the same
 Terms he did begin, when we were in
 a state of Sin, and when we were Ene-
 mies

mies to him by wicked Works. He did Dist. xlv
 Begin then, when he found us in our 
 Blood. It is easy for us to Believe, that
 God, who of his own accord did Be-
 gin, when he found us in a *State of Sin*,
 will not give over and leave us, when
 he finds us in the Motion of *Repentance*.
 And that is the *Sixth* particular, Tho'
 God *begin with less*, he *will go on with*
more. And this is a great Encourage-
 ment for any Man to set about the
 Work of Religion, and to make Appli-
 cation to God; because he doe not know
 how far God will enable him in time
 to come. Just as our Saviour said to
 his Disciples, *when you shall be brought*
before Princes and Governours, consider
not before hand, what ye shall Answer;
for it shall be given you in that hour, what
ye shall say, Mat. 10. 18, 19. So that,
 let no Man be Discourag'd, though that
 which he now hath, be not sufficient
 for to carry him through that which
 he hath before him: For, as his Work
 shall increase and grow greater, God
 will furnish him with that Assistance,
 that shall be suitable, and sufficient for
 what he calls him unto.

Seventbly, God Speaketh Absolutely,
 Positively, and without any Reservation;
 that

Vol. I. that when a Sinner turneth away from his
 Wickedness, he shall save his Soul alive.
 When we have but half a Mind, We
 Speak with Caution, Reservation, and
 upon Supposition: But here God speaketh
 absolutely, clearly, and fully, without
 Ifs or Ands, that so we may see his
 Mind, and know what to trust to. We
 use to doubt of Men's Performance of
 their Words, if they speak waveringly,
 and as it were unwillingly; But thus it
 is not with God, He speaks freely, and
 without Reservation. And to assure us
 hereof, we have first of all the Excel-
 lency of his Nature, and secondly his
 Truth and Faithfulness. Also God lo-
 seth nothing by the Sinners Return to
 Him. When his Creature is Gained,
 He accounts it as Gain to Himself; so
 that nothing obstructs but our own Ob-
 stinacy, and unworthy Refusal; and
 for that we must blame our selves,
Prov. i. 24. God saith, *because I have*
stretch'd out my Hand, and ye refused;
therefore I will Laugh at your Destruction.
 It is God-like, to take pleasure in the
 Good of others. We know whose Na-
 ture it is to take Pleasure in the Ruine
 of others; and who it is that goeth
 about seeking whom he may Devour;
 even

even the Devil, whose Nature is most Disc. XIV
Deform'd and Degenerate.

Eighthly, The Repentance of a Sinner, and his turning to God, is a thing so acceptable and well pleasing to God, that He will greatly Reward those that have any hand in it, *Dan. 12. 3. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And our Saviour saith, there is Joy in Heaven, at the Conversion of a Luk. 15. 7.

Sinner. And if this may be said to be done by us, which are but Instruments; much more by him that is the principal and chief Agent. God himself doth so much Favour and Delight in this Work of a Sinner's Conversion; that when we shall come to know better, how much God was concerned in it; we shall think Eternity it self too streight, and too narrow for us, to Magnify and Praise so good a God, so well deserving at our hands. What Encouragement was it for a Prodigal Son, to be so kindly receiv'd by his Father, *Luk. 15. 11, &c.*

Now the Conclusion of all, is this; since, as we have seen, Sin is so fatal and Mischievous to us; and the Condition of every Sinner so horrid and lamentable

Vol. I.  mentable, that is *not* brought to Repentance, and into Reconciliation with God, and to the Law of everlasting Righteousness and Truth: Since, if we are not according to the Mind of God, we can never be Acceptable to Him, nor made Happy by Him: And since God doth afford us his Grace and Assistance; let us be Encourag'd to be up and doing, and set our selves with all our might, to leave off to Sin, and to Return to our Duty. 'Tis very good News to a Sick Man, to tell him that his Disease is not Mortal; and to him that is Wounded, that his Wound is Cureable: And 'tis no less Good Tidings to Sinners, that we can tell them, that their Sins are Pardonable upon their Repentance, and that though they have Offended God, they may be Forgiven, and become Acceptable unto him, upon their Conversion, through Christ's Recommendation, and Intercession. And these things make it Credible, which I pray consider.

First, What Sin is, either the Act or Defect of a *Fallible Creature*, and so Reversible. And that by how much the more we are liable to Miscarry through Temptation, by so much the more is
God

God willing to Receive us upon our Repentance, and Return to Him. For this doth Abate the Sin of us Men, in this State of Weakness and contracted Impotency; for our Sin is not like the Sin of the Angels, that fell without a Tempter for ought we know. Disc. XIV.

Secondly, As our Act is Reversible, and made Null by our Repentance, and Self-Condernation, so God hath all Right to Pardon. *First*, as He is Lord and Owner of the Creature. *Secondly*, as He is Governour of the World, so also as he is the First and Chief Goodness. So that if it doth consist with Goodness and the Honour of his Government, a Sinner may be Sure to have it upon the Terms of the Gospel. But then you must come to God's Terms; for otherwise it is good to controul Wickedness and Sin; and it is a Righteous thing with God, to render Tribulation to those that continue Obstinate.

Thirdly, God *de facto*, hath, and will Pardon Sin to the Penitent. Such is the Excellency of his Nature, that he takes Delight in it. And I will add one thing more that God Concerns himself in our Affairs, and takes care of Man; and this hath an Universal Acknowledgment;

Vol. I. ment; yea, 'tis the very Sense of our Natures, and the Dictates of our Reason; as I will shew you in these Instances.

1st, If at any time, we fall into Distress, what comes sooner out of our Mouth, than *O God, or God help me.*

2^{dly}, If we do engage, or Undertake any thing wherein there is Difficulty; we say *In the Name of God.*

3^{dly}, In our Narration, all sober Men say, *as God would have it.*

4^{thly}, In our Deprecations of things that are formidable; we say, *God forbid.*

5^{thly}, In our Thanksgivings, we Ordinarily say, *God be Blessed; or I Thank God.*

6^{thly}, In our Protestations, we say *Before God, or, as in the Presence of God!*

7^{thly}, In our Salutations, one of another, we say, *God be with you, or God keep you.*

And though these in the Mouths of many Men, are formal, and without due Consideration; yet the Custom of them does proceed from a very good Original, and they speak Natures sense; and shew that there is Motion in our Minds towards God; and some Sense of him upon our Spirits:

DISCOURSE XV.

The Conversion of a Sinner.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

I Have Purposed, in the close of my Disc. XV. Discourse on this Text, to speak to five things.

I. The Time when the Wicked turneth away from his Wickedness.

II. The Quality of the Person; Wicked. When the Wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness.

III. The Motion: Turneth away from his Wickedness.

IV. To

Vol. I.



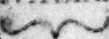
IV. To give an Account of what is *Lawful and Right*; when the Wicked turneth away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is Lawful and Right.

V. To shew the *Good Effect* of this Motion, he shall save his Soul alive.

First, For the *Time* of his Conversion and Return to God; it is Indefinitely Spoken, and doth not exclude *Late Time*, which may be an Encouragement to every one, be his Case never so Desperate. But then, this is not Spoken to Encourage Men's Delays and Put-offs; for there are four great Evils Consequent upon that.

Rom. 6.1, 2.

VX. 511



1st. It were to *Ill-Resent* the Goodness of God, thus to Requite his Grace and Favour, that we continue in Sin because God is Gracious. *God Forbid* (saith the Apostle) that we should continue in Sin, because *Grace doth abound*; This would be horrid Ingratitude, and Disingenuity.

2^{dly}, It were to *Abuse* our selves, and do our selves more and more harm. For Evil is against the Nature of Man; it is such a thing as marrs his Nature, and spoils his Principle. Therefore we should never Meddle with it, and much less continue in it.

3^{dly},

galy, It would make the Work which is necessary to our Happiness, much more *hard and Difficult*. For ill Use doth contract bad Habits; and bad Habits contracted by long Use and Custom, are with great Difficulty left off. This the Prophet supposeth in those Words, when he saith; can the *Blackmore change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* *then they which are accustomed to do Evil, may learn to do well,* Jeri 13. 23. Impudence and Immodesty, grow upon those that continue in the Practice of Iniquity.

Ably, Continuance in Sin doth expose us to far greater *Danger*.

1. Because of the great Uncertainty of Life, for who can promise himself another Day, nay another Moment? and

2. Because of the Devil's repeated and continued Assaults, by which, he will still get the more Advantage upon us; and so it will become the more difficult, to get him out of Possession.

3. In Respect of the Insinuations of *Bad Company*, and *Converse*. For Men that are Bad themselves, will keep such Company as themselves; and Company and Converse are of an insinuating Quality; and that is done by *Treaty*;

Vol. I. and Converſe, which is not done on a ſudden.

4. All the while you ſtand out, you are in a way of *Reſiſtance* of the Holy Spirit, and Fight againſt the Motions of God Almighty; which are neceſſary to bring you to Good, and to Qualify you for Eternal Life. Let therefore no Man think, that he may lead a Sinful Life of Pleaſure heré; and Immediately Repent and enter into Life. For Heaven is rather a *State* than a *Place*; and doth require a good Temper of Mind, to Qualify us for the Enjoyment of it. And we are ſaid to be *Saved*, in the Language of Scripture, when we are Delivered from *our Sins*, and Qualified for the Enjoyment of God. And there muſt be *Salvation of Grace*, as antecedent to that of *Glory*. For Happineſs hath its Foundation in Holineſs, and there muſt be either a Conſcience void of Offence, by abſolute *Innocence*; or eaſe of Guilt, by our *Repentance*, and *God's Pardon*: Otherwiſe there is no Salvation; for, a Guilty Conſcience hath Hell within it ſelf. There are many that would be Saved in a Negative Senſe, that is, they would not be Damned; but *this* is not a juſt Explication

In Virtute
poſita eſt ve-
ra Felicitas
Sen. de Vita
Beata.

tion of Salvation; for Heaven and Sal- Disc. XV.
vation is Begun here, and therefore the
Apostle saith, *who hath Saved us, and*
called us. And so much for the first 2 Tim. I. 9.
particular, the *Time* when the Wicked
Turneth away from his Wickedness.

Secondly, The Quality of the Person;
Wicked. And here I must acquaint you,
that Scripture doth not denominate
persons *Wicked*, or *Sinners*, or *Workers*
of Iniquity; from Weaknesses, Failings,
or from Error of Judgment, or from In-
disposition at times, from sudain Passion,
or Surprizal; nor from the Irregularity
of the first Motion, that is so Trouble-
some and Grievous unto us all. But
they are called *Sinners* and *Wicked* Per-
sons, who *Voluntarily consent to known*
Iniquity; who while they have Know-
ledge and Judgment of that which is
Right, for base Ends and Purposes act
contrary thereunto, and continue in
Sin and Apostasie from the Truth.
Sins of the former sort, such as Weak-
ness and Failings, through Temptation
or sudain surprize; require our Modesty,
and asking God Forgiveness; as also
our greater Care and Diligence, and
constant Application to God, and Com-
mitting our selves into his Hand; and

Vol. I. in so doing, God doth readily Forgive.
 ~~~~~ For he remembers our Frame, and considers and makes allowance for our Weakness, Ps. 103. 13. and Mat. 3. 17.   
*As a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him; and He will spare them as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him.*

*Thirdly*, I now proceed to the Third, to shew when a Man may be said to Turn from his Wickedness; to which enquiry, I shall Answer by Three Negative, and Three Affirmative Propositions. The Negatives are these,

1<sup>st</sup>. A Man is *not* said to turn away from his Iniquities, when his Sin rather leaves him, than he leaves it; either through Age and Disability of Body; or through Weakness and Infirmary; so that he cannot bear to do as he has formerly done. Now, this is the case many times of the Riotous and Intemperate, who use to Rise up early in the Morning, that they might follow strong Drink; that continue until Night, till Wine Inflame them. But this, they cannot do always. Then for the Prodigal, that profusely spends all that he hath, and is brought to a Morfel of Bread, and like him that we read of Luk. 15. 14. made to feed with

with the Swine upon Husks; such a Disc. xv.  
Man's Sin hath rather left him, than he  
it. The like may be said of *Wanton* Las-  
civious persons, that have quite spoiled  
and Disabled their Bodies. And also  
of *False Dealers*, who have been so of-  
ten found out, that no body will trust  
them, or have to do with them; you  
cannot say that such Men as these have  
turned from their Wickedness.

2. Such Men as are *not* at their  
own *Liberty*; but under Tutors and Go-  
vernours, whom they dare not disobey;  
who are, as it were shut up, and not su-  
ffered to ramble abroad. These Men can-  
not be said to have Turned from their  
Wickedness.

3. Nor *when Sin is made bitter*  
to Men, by suffering the bad Conse-  
quences that follow upon it. Sometimes  
Men suffer in their Names, or in their  
Estates, or in their Bodies. Guilt doth  
always Prophesy Evil things, and Sin is a  
Shame and Reproach to any Person that  
commits it. *Pro. 23. 29. Who hath We,*  
*who hath Sorrow, who hath Contentions,*  
*who hath Babbings, who hath Wounds*  
*without Cause, who hath redness of Eyes?*  
*They that tarry long at the Wine; they*  
*that go to seek new Wine.* It is said of  
B b 3      Lascivious,

Vol. I.  Laziness, Idleness and Sluggishness, that it is more Painful than Industry and Diligence; and to be Employed, is easier than to be Idle. So it may be said of other Vices; the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies that follow upon dissolute Living, and naughty Practices, are not Balanced by the Pleasure that they bring, but are dearly Paid for. Whereas ways of Goodness and Vertue are delightful, and end in Peace; as you read *Prov. 3. 17. All her Ways are Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* For the several Vertues they are suitable and connatural; every Vertue is according to the Nature of Man, and agrees with the reason of his Mind, which is the Superiour and Governing Principle. As to instance, by comparing some Vertues and Vices together. Pride, Insolence, Envy, Malice; these are Troublesome and Unnatural: There is no greater Torment, or worse Rack, than for a Man to live in Malice, and bear Envy and Ill-Will. Those that are Arrogant and Proud, Create to themselves a World of Difficulty, besides much Ill-Will and Displeasure: Whereas Modesty, Gentleness, Loving-kindness, Quietness, is according to the Nature of Man, and creates



ates no trouble or difficulty to a Man. Disc. XV.  
But to return to the matter in hand. There is much Difference between these two; between our Leaving of Sin, and its Leaving of us; when we do not act from our own Principle; but the bitterness of Sin appears by its Sufferings, and by this, we are made to Desist; in these Cases a Man cannot be said to Return from his Wickedness. But then *Affirmatively*, in three particulars.

1<sup>st</sup>. When we Leave Sin out of Sense and Judgment of its *Vileness*, and Impurity. For all Sin is such in its own Nature; and therefore we read, that the Sons of *Eli made themselves vile by their Wickedness*, 1 Sam. 13. And Jer. 1. 17. we read *That it is an Evil, and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord our God*. For in Morals you must know that the Ground, Motive and Reason of the Action, doth Specificate the Action, rather than the Matter of it. For two persons may do One, and the same Action; the same thing materially may be done; and yet the Action may be very Different, because of the Ground, Principle, and Motive, upon which it was done. This for certain you must know, that it is not a Vertuous Action, if it be not done *because* the thing is

Vol. I. Good, and avoided *because* it is Evil. That is the first, when we Leave Sin, out of Sense and Judgment of its Vileness, Badness and Iniquity.

2. When we leave Sin out of *Respect* to God, in Obedience unto his Laws, and Love to Him. This was the Temper found in *Joseph*; who, when Sin was presented to him, said *how can I do this Wickedness, and Sin against God?* Gen. 39. 9. When it is more to us, to give God an Offence, than to Expose our own Lives and Liberties. When a Man will not destroy the Cause of God, to save his own Life. Now if it be *suggested*, That this is a Notion not practicable, because God is at so great a Distance. *I Answer*, It is done out of Respect to God, when we do a thing because it is Just, Fit and Right; because it is Good and ought to be. And this is Intelligible; for every Man knows what is the Ground and Reason of his Action; he knows whether he doth it out of a sense of the Goodness of the Thing it self; or out of any other reason. For Man, as a Moral Agent, is only considerable, as to his *End* and *Principle*. For God is best known to us, by being Good, as being the First and chiefest Goodness. To do a thing

a thing therefore, because it is *Good*, is to do it out of Love to God: And to Avoid a thing because it is *Evil*, is the same as not to do it, because it will give God an Offence. And this is an Explication of doing a thing out of *Love to God*, and out of *Respect to Him*. And I have found this among the *Philosophers*, that never had the Advantage of a Bible, who tell us, "That if any thing be without Respect to God, it is not an Action of Vertue. There is nothing in the World better known to us, if we sink not down by Sensuality into Brutishness; or by Malice into Devilishness; than that there is a God, and a Difference between *Good* and *Evil*. These we are all made to know, and herein we may not fail. Whosoever doth not know these things, it is matter of his Shame, and a Sign that he hath greatly Neglected himself. For who doth not know that it is better for a Man to live in Love and Goodwill, than to live in Malice, Envy, Hatred, &c. Who doth not know, it is better for a Man to be Sober, Just and Temperate, than to be Wanton and lascivious? For a Man to Govern himself according to Nature and Reason, than

for

Disc. XV.

Marc. Anton. L. 3. §. 13. & L. 2. §. 3.  
1 Cor. 10. 31, 32.  
Εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀφορῶντας ἐν παντί, μετὰ φόβου καὶ μετὰ ἰσχύος!  
Epist.



Vol. I. for to Abuse himself? Who doth not know, that it is better to Honour God, and to give him Thanks, than to Blaspheme him? That is the Second, when we leave Sin out of *Judgment* and Sense of its Filthiness and Baseness, when we do our Duty out of Respect to God, and in Obedience to his Laws and Love to Him.

3. A Man cannot be said to Return from his Wickedness, unless he doth conceive *Displeasure* at it, and Resolve never to have to do with it again. Thus when a Man leaves Sin, with Displacency and Abhorrence; he may be said to Turn away from it: Otherwise it is but Forbearance for a while, upon some Reason, and as a matter of Prudence, like that of *Felix*, *Act* 24. 25. *God speaks Peace unto his People, but let them not return again to folly, as the Psalmist hath it, Ps. 18. 8.*

85. If a Man do not continue in a good Course, it cannot be said that he is Turned from his Wickedness, nor that it proceeded from the Change of his Nature, but was rather a Suspension, than a Dislike of his former ways. They that *Love the Lord*, and do sincerely Turn to him, *Hate Evil. Ps. 47. 10.*

We

We must not only depart from Evil, and do Good, but we *must Hate Evil*, as the Apostle Directs, Rom. 12. 9. *We must Abhor Evil, and Cleave unto that which is Good.* This is the third Particular. When Men leave their Sins out of Displacency, and take Offence at them; otherwise it may be Forbearance upon some Prudential Account; but doth not amount to *Turning away from their Wickedness.* So that you see this Alteration is by the Motion of the Mind, and Understanding; and is made by the choice of the Will; the Mind is chang'd, and other Judgment is made, so that this Man Differs from himself. As a Man Differs that was in a deadly Disease, and is Restored; so doth a Man Differ from himself, after he leaves Sin, and doth Return to his Duty. And so much for the Third thing, when a Man may be said to Return from his Wickedness.

*Fourthly,* In the next place I am to give you an Account of *Lawful and Right.* *When the Wicked Man turns away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is Lawful and Right.* Here are Two Words for one and the same thing; and the one is Explicatory of the other. Now this is that, which we all ought to do

Vol. I.



do; and there is no pretence of Power and Privilege, to the contrary. And if every Body did confine himself to that which is Right, Just and Fit, we should have a *New World*; and there would be nothing of Wrong, or hard Measure, found among us; we should then be the better one for another. But here is the Mischief, some go beyond their Bonds, and do not confine themselves to that which is *Lawful* and *Right*; which are but two Words for the same thing.

*Right* gives Rule to the *Law*; and the *Law* doth declare what is *Right*: And it is not a *Law*, if it be *Unrighteous* and *unjust*. This must be true of all *Humane Laws*; for I am sure it is true of all the *Laws of God*. The Psalmist saith, *Ps. 119. 142. That thy Law is Truth*; that is, it is as it should be; for *Right* is the Boundary of *Power* and *Privilege*; for it is not *Power*, if it be not in *Conjunction* with *Right* and *Truth*; for *God* declares that his *Throne is established in Righteousness*, *Ps. 89. 14*. It is not *Power* to be able to do that which ought not to be done; for *Ungovern'd Appetite* is not *Power*, but *Weakness*. It is not *Power* to do *Evil*, but *Impotency*, *Weakness* and *Deformity*. *Free-will*, which



which we so much contend for, and brag so much of; it is no absolute Perfection, and we need not be so proud of it. For Free-will, as it includes a Power to do Wrong, as well as Right, is not to be found in God himself; and therefore it is no Perfection in us. For this is true of God, that all his ways are ways of Righteousness, Goodness and Truth; and there is not in Him a Power to do otherwise than is Just and Right. And if we were God-like, as we should be; the *Fruit of the Spirit in us* would be *in all Righteousness, Goodness and Truth*. Eph. 5. 9. If this were the Religion of the World, where would be Revenge, Malice, Spite, and doing wrong one to another? And as God doth that in all Cases, which is Just, Fit, Right and Good; so doth He require of Us, nothing but what is Just, Right, Fit, and Good. And this He doth require of us, under the promise of a Reward, tho' it is our Duty so to do and our Righteousness to be found in such ways. And God prohibits us nothing that is Right and Good; and wheresoever he doth impose a Law upon us, he shews us that it is fit for us to be restrain'd, and shews us that his Laws are easy and profitable for

Vol. I. for us. I am not far from the Opinion  
 ~~~~~ of those Men that think the Prohibition  
 laid upon *Adam*, in Paradise, was no
 so much to shew his Power, as Monito-
 ry; that the Fruit was not good for
 Man, and would do him Harm, if he
 medled with it. If it be so, then it
 doth take off that, which some Men
 think doth reflect upon the Divine
 Goodness. But for this, let him Receive
 it, that sees Cause.

Now if it be so, That God commands
 nothing but what is Reasonable, Just
 and Fit, and prohibits nothing but
 what is noxious to us, and for our hurt
 and prejudice: Then how comes it to
 pass that We, sorry, impotent Crea-
 tures, pretend to Power and Privilege,
 otherwise than what is Right and Just,
 or for the Best? How comes it to pass
 that We are so addicted to set up Will
 for a Rule, and for a Law; a Will
 contrary to God, and to the Reason
 of the Thing, which is a Law antece-
 dent to the very Creation? For upon
 this Supposition, that God will make
 such a Creature as Man, the *Reason*
of Things requires that he should be made
 under such a Law, and under such Ob-
 ligations. For if God do make a Crea-
 ture

ture that is Voluntary and Intelligent; Disc. XV.
 we must leave him to the direction of
 his Faculties, otherwise he should controul
 his own Workmanship. Now, Will is no Rule at all, nor gives any
 Warrant: the Laws of Nature ought
 not to be varied from, that is, *what*
is Reason, what is Right and Fit. Will
 stands for nothing, in disjunction from
 Reason and Right. There is nothing
 gives more Offence, than for a Man
 proudly and malepertly to say, *be Will,*
because he Will. Our Apprehensions of
 Right, are regulated by the Nature of
 things; and we have a Lye in our
 Minds, if we act otherwise. For *Truth*
is first in Things, and then is the Truth
in our Understandings. Truth lyes in
 our Regularity and Conformity with
 our Apprehension of the Reason of
 Things: And I am therefore in the
 Truth, because I conceive of Things as
 they are. But *Things* give Law to No-
 tion and Apprehension. This is a gal-
 lant Theam that I am upon, and a
 more generous Argument there is not
 under the Sun; and that which would
 tend to the Settlement of the World,
 and every body in their Dues and
 Rights.

But

Vol. I. But a Man may Philosophise never so well in Generals; if he do not bring down things to Particulars, it will not do. Now therefore go along with me, and I will Particularise this in Notion and Cases.

There is a Rule of Right in all Cases, and tis the Charge of all Persons in the use of Power, to judge and determine according unto that Rule. And he is Weak that cannot judge what is the Right of the Case; and Wicked, that for Ends and Purposes, will Vary from it. Now that there is a Rule of Right in all Cases, I will shew you in particular Instances. And

1st. I will begin with the Relation that is between Parents and Children, and shew you what is Right for Parents to do with their Children, and Children to their Parents. 1st. For the Parent who is, in a sort, in the Order of God to the Children; as being next after God, the cause of their Being and Original; yet he must not behave himself any way, nor after any fashion, towards his Children. For it is said, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath*. He must deal with them tenderly, and in a way of Reason, and not Justly give them Offence,

Offence, or provoke them. This is the *Right of the case* between *Fathers and Children*. Then for the *Child*, he must Obey his Parents in all things, and must do as he is bidden, so there be nothing unreasonable or Evil in it. Dist. xv.

2. I go to the Relation of *Husbands and Wives*; there is the *Right of the case* between them. For the *Husband*, that in some things hath the Superiority, and is the first Mover, yet Col. 3. 19. we read, that the Husband *must not be bitter against his Wife*; nor give her an Offensive Word, nor use any hard Language; but lead her on fairly, by reason; and satisfy her by Argument, and in a fair way. And this is the *Right of the case*, as to that. Then he ought to give her *Honour*, as the weaker Vessel, and give her the Advantage of her Sex, as you read 1 Pet. 3. 7. Then for the *Right of the case*, as to the *Wife*, towards her *Husband*: The *Wives Conversation* towards her Husband, ought to be such as to gain upon him, supposing that he be not in all things as he ought: As that if he be froward and hard to please; the *Wives Conversation* ought to be endearing, that so she may thereby gain upon him, and bring him to Tem-

1 Pet. 3. 1.

C c

3. Then pe

Vol. I.

3. Then for Masters and Servants. Masters render to your Servants what is Right, that which is equal, fair and Reasonable. Do not Usurp over them, do not use them as if they were Irrational Creatures, but as those that are of the same Species and kind with themselves; *not using Threatning Words*, but remembering that they have a Master in Heaven, and that there is no respect of Persons with him. Then for Servants, there is the Right of the case for them also, and that is to Obey their Masters in all things, and to be True and Faithful to them. And to do as the Centurion said of his Servants; to one he said go, and he went; and to another come, and he cometh. I have in short given you the Right of the case, in these three Relations, of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Master and Servant.

Then in our Common Converse, we ought to use all Humanity, Courtesy and Affability, giving all Respect, despising no body. We ought not so much to Undervalue any Man in Company, as to refuse to hear his Sense. For I would never come into that Man's Company, that I would not hear his Sense. Then we must be ready to render a Reason to every

every one that demandeth it; 1 Pet. 3. Disc. XV.
15. Then for our Carriage towards the
Poor, the *Right of the case* is set down
Ecclesiasticus 4. 4. we must not turn away
from a Poor man, but hear him speak,
and give him a fair answer, if you can-
not answer his request. This is agree-
ble to the counsel of the Son of Syrac,
who saith, *Let it not grieve thee to bow
down thine ear unto the Poor, and to give
him an answer with Meekness.*

Lastly, To descend to the Creatures
below us, there is a *Right of the case*
here also. We must not Abuse any of
those Creatures below us. For Solomon
saith, the *Righteous man takes care of his
Beast*: we must not abuse so much as
our Horse, or our Dog. By these you
See, that there is in all times and Cases,
the *Rule of Right*, which is to do
as the case require towards all Persons,
in all Times, and in all Cases. What is
Reason, what is Right, what is Fit? e-
ven as we our selves would be done to,
were we in those circumstances. And
it is a Man's Understanding, to find out
what *that is*; and his Uprightness and
Integrity, to do accordingly.

Now if this be true, 'tis adviseable
that a man be *habituated* and well

Vol. I. Prepared, that he may not be at a loss.

~~~~~ If a Man have pre-considered, and examined and been well advised before hand; when any case comes, he is prepared, and so he will be ready to do as *the Right of the case* require. Whereas if he be otherwise, he will be at a loss, and not know what to do when he comes to act. It is hap-hazard whether he will do Right, or Wrong: and so will not act like a Man of Prudence, and Vertue. For, this I must tell you, Passion and Self-will, are no Principle of Action; by these we are never to Act, nor to Warrant any thing we do. For he that doth this, acts not like a Man, but like a Fury; he doth not act according to the Principle of Reason, but like a mad Man. The great Iniquity in this Inferior world, is this, that Men assume to themselves to do because they *Will*, which is a very great Transgression, and the highest exorbitancy of extravagant Creatures. For a Man to do *because he will*, or because he hath a mind, alas this is nothing to any Man else. What is this Man's Mind, to another Man? for he expects to be dealt with according to *Reason*, and the *Right*

of the case. There are some Men, <sup>Disc. XV.</sup>  
that are so governed by this Rule,  
that a Man may know how they  
will act in any case. But those *Ar-*  
*bitrary* Men, are Men that live in a  
Humor, or Passion: and no Man  
knows where to have them, or what  
they will do.

---

C 3

DIS-



of the case. There are some who say that it is to be governed by the state, that a man may know how they will act in any case. But those who say that Men are men that live in Honor, or Honor; and no man knows where to have them, or that they will do.

DIS-

## DISCOURSE XVI.

*The Conversion of a Sinner.*

EZEK. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked Man turneth away  
from his Wickedness that he hath  
committed, and doth that which is  
lawful and right, he shall save his  
Soul alive.*

THE foregoing Truth I have de-  
clared with great Assurance unto  
you: and I am confident nothing in  
God's Creation can stand up in Opposi-  
tion to this Noble and Generous No-  
tion. And could I but fasten this up-  
on the World, I should mend the  
World: For Reformation must begin  
*from within*, from the better Informa-  
tion of Mens Minds, before ever their

Disc. XVI.

Vol. I. Actions will be well directed and governed.

But here some one may rise up and say, may I not *Please my own Mind?*

Yes, thou may'st Please thy self in *Materia Libera*; that is, in Matters of thy own Right; where no body else hath any demand of Right. Where the Matter is wholly Free and Indifferent, as whether a Man will ride or go on foot: in which, and a thousand other things of like nature, he doth no body any Injury. Or,

Where it is only a Man's own Right, and no other Man hath any Demand upon him: there a Man may Please his own Mind, without any Offence to God, or Injury to Men. But otherwise, if I have not the *sole* Right, but another hath a Demand; then this of Pleasing a Man's self, or doing according to his own Mind, must be excluded, and shut out of Doors. I say, where the Reason of the thing is contrary, or Others have a Demand or Right, there a Man's own Mind is no Warrant. Therefore this is that I Resolve upon, wherever a Man hath Authority



thority, or a lawful Use, I would al-  
ways have him have Reason go along  
with the Use of his Authority; and  
then He will have a great Satisfaction  
that doth command: and *Others* will  
easily and readily obey. For a Man  
loves to see Reason, for what he doth;  
and then a Man's Commands are justi-  
fied, when Reason runs along with his  
Will and Pleasure. And he that obeys,  
will find it mighty easie to obey Rea-  
son; but it is horribly troublesome to do  
without Reason, and still worse to do  
against it. To obey without Reason,  
is to be led like Beasts; and the Nature  
of Man will be impatient under it: For  
this is that which all Men call for, *Do  
me Reason, Do me Right*; and when  
this is done, Men are satisfied. And  
this no Man should deny; for God him-  
self hath given Reason for the Rule  
of Action and Law of Right. And  
'tis the very self same thing for a Man  
to observe God and fulfil his Will,  
and to do that which Reason doth re-  
quire. For Right is determined by its  
agreeableness with the *Reason of Things*;  
and things are driven by Force and Vi-  
olence, that are not done with Reason:  
and therefore will return back again,

as

Vol. I. as soon as that Force is taken off. As if by Power you bend a Stick, it will return to its streightness, as soon as that Force is taken off. If you draw a Bow by Strength never so much, it will return to its former Latitude, when the Hand is taken off. Things will not hold long, if under Force and Violence; but if they be according to the Right of the Case, and according to Reason, they will hold when they are done. And this is that which God expects, that a wicked Man should *Turn from his Wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right; by which he shall save his Soul alive.* Which brings me

*Fifthly, To the Beneficial Part of the Words, the Happiness that follows upon Renovation, Repentance, and turning to God. He that doth so, shall save his Soul alive.* Where you have the principal Part put for the whole: not that the Body shall be neglected; for God that takes care of Oxen, will take care of them also. He shall save his Soul alive; Not as if we were not to look upon the Soul as Immortal: But this is the Account I give of that. Misery is worse than Death; to live, is to be well and in good Health. I am fully satisfied,

fied, that it is better not to be at all, Disc. XVI.  
 than to be miserable; and for this I  
 will take our Saviour's warrant, Mar.  
 14. 21. where he saith, *That it had been*  
*good for that Man if he had not been born,*  
*that should betray the Son of God.*  
 And the Apostle tells us, of the Woman  
 that liveth in Wantonness, that she is  
*dead even while she liveth.* If any Man  
 be under Guilt, he is dead while alive.  
 Whosoever doth amiss, doth abuse him-  
 self, and wrong his own Soul: And he  
 that doth continue in ill doing, doth  
 take a course finally to undo himself.  
 It is the case of us Men, even of us,  
 sometimes in life to have done amiss,  
 and to have perverted our way. But  
 thanks be to God, through the Grace  
 of the Gospel, there is a way of Reco-  
 very: Repentance is a Plank after Ship-  
 wreck, whereby a Man may save him-  
 self; we are therefore not to Despair,  
 but to Turn from our Wickedness; and  
 we have God's Declaration and Pro-  
 mise that we shall *save our Souls alive.*  
 Tis a great Word, but God hath  
 spoken it, and shall not he make it good?  
*Isai. 45. He shall save his Soul alive:* It  
 is God that hath spoken it, in whose  
 Hands are the Issues of Life and Death,  
 who



Vol. I. who hath Power to kill and to make  
 ~~~~~ alive, Matt. 10. In the five Books of  
 Moses you have often these Words,
*That Soul shall be cut off from among his
 people*: that is, the Punishment shall be
 inflicted by the Hand of God himself.
 And therefore it is said to be a fearful
 thing to fall into the hands of the li-
 ving God. This sometimes, yea very
 often, is the case of those, which sin
 so secretly, that they escape the Cog-
 nizance of Men. But the more are
 such Men in Danger of falling by the
 Hand of God; if by the Secretness of
 the Fact, the Judgment of Man can-
 not lay hold of it. For this is most
 certain, that none shall finally prevail
 in Wickedness: *Though hand joyn in hand,
 yet the wicked shall not go unpunished.*
 And where the Hand of the Magistrate,
 either because of Power, or Secrecy,
 cannot reach, God himself will Judge
 in those cases; and He will proceed
 according as things are. Though be-
 fore Men, not to be Proved, and not
 to Be, are the same thing; yet God
 searcheth the Heart, and he cannot
 be deceived. God hath given us dou-
 ble Security for our Lives, and we have
 just Expectation from both: the First
 is

Prov. 11.
 21.

is from Innocence, for God made us in his own Image. But because we have failed, here is a *Second* Provision that God hath made by the Motion of Repentance, and this is God's After-Grant. The first was the state of God's Creation: the next was that of Restauration, and Recovery by Repentance, which is declared by the Gospel. So that now having lost our Innocence, let us look after Salvation by the Motion of Repentance, which through God's Grace is sufficient, and will be effectual to prevent Punishment: which is the true Explication of *Remission of Sins*. For if Sin be committed, no Power can make that not to have been done. Nor Secondly, if a thing hath been done amiss, can it be made not to be worthy of Punishment. But the Forgiveness of Sin doth prevent the deserved Punishment of Sin. Therefore, since we have All of us lost the Snow-like whiteness of Innocence, which was the Beauty of our Creation: Let us now look after that whiteness which is by Blood. For so you have the Expression in the *Revelations*: That they were *washed white in the Blood of the Lamb*. The Faith of

Disc. XVI.

Rev. 7. 14.

Vol. I. of the Lord *Jesus Christ* conjoyned with
 ~~~~~ our Repentance and Reformation, is  
 now the only way to obtain Pardon  
 and Forgiveness. Now unless a Man  
 Repent, he cannot be sensible of the  
 Impurity of the Act, nor of his Dan-  
 ger thereby; and till this be done, he  
 will not seek after his Remedy, no more  
 than a Man will seek after a Physitian,  
 that is not sensible of his Disease, nor  
 of his Danger by means thereof. No  
 Man will go to *Christ* for Pardon, un-  
 less he be sensible of the Evil of Sin,  
 and of which he doth Repent, and  
 Condemn himself, and Resolve against  
 it; for no true Penitent doth allow  
 himself in Sin.

But farther, *shall save his Soul alive.*  
 From this we may understand of how  
 great Benefit the good Use and Im-  
 provement of our *Time* is. Time though  
 it be of the slenderest Entity, yet 'tis  
 of the most Moral Consideration, be-  
 cause improveable to the highest Ad-  
 vantage. Our Time is a day of Grace,  
 for we are in a Probation-State: So  
 that now it fairly lyes before us, to  
 make our selves Happy for ever. And  
 we may also by the Abuse of the Grace  
 of God, Undo our selves for ever.  
 Therefore



Therefore I say unto you in the Words Dife. xvi.  
of Dent 30. 19. *I set before you this day*  
*Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing,*  
*choose Life.* For when a *Wicked Man*  
*turneth away from his Wickedness that he*  
*hath committed, and doth that which is*  
*lawful and right, he shall save his Soul*  
*alive.* But if he continue in Wicked-  
ness, he shall surely die.

How many are there that Overlook  
the Business, Purpose and Intention of  
Life! We are here to run a Race, and  
so to run that we may obtain: and  
therefore we are to Watch over our  
selves, both as to the things of our  
Mind, and Body; And so to keep un-  
der our Bodies, and bring them into  
Subjection, that we may not ruin and  
undo our selves. Now this is another  
thing, than to gratifie our Sense, and  
live in a Humour. No, no, we must  
run the Race that is set before us, and  
as those that strain for the Mastery,  
must be Temperate in all things. This is  
our Business, to serve the Interest of our  
Souls, in the state that is before us.  
Therefore I advise every Man that is  
serious, to ask himself these Que-  
stions.

1<sup>st</sup>. Will

Vol. I. 1<sup>st</sup>. Will this that I have done, or  
 ~~~~~ am doing, be Accountable, when God  
 shall call me to a Reckoning? When
 any thing doubtful is proposed, or of
 a bad Quality, then ask this Question;
 Shall I be able to give an Account for
 this, when I shall stand before the Tri-
 bunal Seat of Christ? The

2^d. Question is that which *Abigail*
 put to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 25. *This will*
be no grief of Heart, nor offence unto
thee.

3^d. Question is, What shall I think
 of this, when I shall lye upon my Death
 Bed? What Judgment or Apprehension
 shall I have of it then? The

4th. Question is, How Remediless
 will the Consequence of Evil be, when
 I shall have the least Relief by my Rea-
 son, and be least capable of Advice;
 and when I shall have the least Assistance
 of God's Grace and Spirit? How shall
 I be then able to bear up against the
 intolerable Burthen of Evil and Guilt
 too? Let us consider that we Dye daily,
 in a threefold respect; in respect of Age,
 in respect of Diseases, and in respect of
 Hazard and Danger. In respect of Age,
 we grow nearer and nearer unto Death:
 and in respect of Diseases, which is
 Death

Death in some degree: And lastly in Dist. XVI. respect of Hazard and Danger from abroad. For whosoever neglects God and the Law, may be Master of any bodies Life. How will Men satisfie themselves, that take so little care how they pass out of Time, into Eternity? That live and dye in such a Frame and Temper, which is altogether unfit for the Business and Employment of Eternity? For if we expect to be Happy, and to attend upon God, and holy Angels, and Saints in Glory; it is necessary that we free our selves from all Impurity, and by Holiness of Life qualifie our selves for the Enjoyment of God. For our Saviour hath told us, that unless we be converted, and become as little Children, that are Innocent and Harmless, that may suffer wrong but will do none, we cannot enter into Heaven. These three things do utterly unqualifie a Man for the State of Glory and Happiness.

1. Earthliness, Worldliness, and Carnality.

2. A Spirit of Malice, Ill-will, and Revenge.

3. Pride, Arrogancy, and Haughtiness.

D d

1. Earth-

Vol. I. 1. *Earthliness, Worldliness, and Carnality.* The Psalmist tells us, *Psal. 17. 11.* that worldly Men have their portion in this life. They being unqualified for the State of Eternity.

2. Then for those that live in the Spirit of Envy, Malice, and Ill-will. They have the very Spirit and Temper of the Devil, who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

3. And for Pride: the Apostle Jude tells us, that this was the very temper of the Angels that fell, that kept not their first State, but through Pride and Arrogance, did assume to themselves.

But to draw to a Conclusion. Since now we have such a Declaration as this in the Text, which contains the fulness of Gospel Knowledge: That *when the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.* Let us entertain good Thoughts of God, let us have right Apprehensions of him in our Minds; always think so of God, as to encourage our Application to Him. And never think that He is Implacable; but that He is ready to forgive, and is no hard Master, nor difficult to please, nor back-

ward to forgive. Yea, I will say more, Disc. XVI
 That God is such a Friend to our
 Souls, and takes such Delight in our
 Conversion and turning to Him, that
 He will not be wanting on his Part,
 to afford us what is necessary, for our
 Enablement and Encouragement. And
 should we think otherwise of God,
 we should fret in our Minds against
 Him, and set down in Discontent and
 Despair: just as you have an account
 in Rev. 9. 6. of some that blasphemed
 God because of their Pains. This was
 the Temper of Cain, who said, *my Sin*
is greater than can be forgiven. By this
 Man doth put himself quite out of
 the way of Forgiveness.

I add, That it is the special and
 genuine Effect of the Mercy of God to
 bring Sinners to Repentance. But by
 every evil Act that a Man doth com-
 mit, his Recovery is the more difficult;
 because Sin doth put a Man quite out
 of Temper, and sets him at the great
 distance from God. For Sin hardens
 a Man's Heart, and spoils the Modesty
 of Intellectual Nature, and much more
 disposeth a Man for Evil, than he was
 before.

Vol. I.

Now in the close of all, I will reinforce the Advice of the Text, That the wicked turn from his Wickedness. And let us not herein be mistaken, for we ought in nothing more to understand our selves aright; because it is the case of Life and Death. Therefore in these cases, as I told you, Men cannot be said to forsake their Sins, when Sin rather leaves them, than they their Sins; when his turning from Sin ariseth rather from abroad, than from himself, and is rather the Effect of his Company, and those that have Power over him. You cannot say that Men turn from their Wickedness, when 'tis not their own Motion, nor what they would do if free, and left to themselves. Nor when a Man out of Fear of former Sufferings, doth not do as formerly he did. For you must know, that all Vice and Wickedness is first contrary to the Reason of our Minds; and secondly, to the Health of our Bodies: for by Sin and Wickedness Men lay the Foundation of Aches and Diseases, and shorten their days. In these Cases, a Man cannot be said to turn from his Sins: but in the other Cases which I named, a Man may be said to turn from his Wickedness.

First,

First, When the wicked Man loaths his Sin out of *Sense* and Judgment of the Baseness and Vileness of it. For the Motion, Ground, and Principle of an Action, doth specificate the Action. And you cannot upon a moral Account, estimate an Action from the Materiality of it, but from the Intention, Motion, Ground, and Principle from which it doth proceed. And it is Reason in Intellectual Nature and Choice, that makes it an Action of Vertue.

Secondly, When we avoid Sin and Evil out of respect to God, because we will not give him an Offence. For this is Religion, to have the *Fear of God* before our Eyes: and 'tis but the Religion of a Heathen, to avoid Sin upon any other account. Now because God is Invisible, if any should ask how he might know what he doth is with respect to God: You may know by that which is materially the same with it. To do a thing because it is consonant to Reason, and to avoid a thing because it is contrary to Reason, is materially the same as to do, or forbear with respect to God. And I will make this out, because two things are Matter of easie Knowledge,

Vol. I. ledge, and the great things of Religion.

1st. That there is a *God*. And,

2ly. That there is a Difference between *Good and Evil*. And if we have not sunk our selves into Brutishness, by Sensuality, or into Devilishness, by Malice, Envy, and Ill-will; a Man cannot be ignorant of either of these.

That there is a *God* every Man must grant, because he did not call himself into Being out of nothing. This is plain, because he cannot continue himself in that Being which he hath. For to call a Thing into Being out of nothing, is an Act of much greater Power, than to continue a Being that we have.

And for the Difference of *Good and Evil*, nothing is more knowable. Will not every Man grant, that there is great Difference between living in Sobriety and Temperance, and living in Luxury and Wantonness; that the one is far better than the other? That it is better for a Man to govern his Passion, and to be Affable and Courteous, than to be Furious, Insolent, Arrogant, and Tumultuous?

3. But

3. But Lastly, A Man may be said Disc. XVI.
to turn from his Wickedness when he
conceives Displeasure against it, and
fully purposes never to return to it a-
gain, whatsoever Temptations or Pro-
vocations he may meet withal. Other-
wise it may be but only Forbearance
of the Act; unless a Man withdraws
from it through dislike, and take up
Resolutions never to do the like. Now
if the wicked Man do thus *Turn away
from his Wickedness, and doth that which
is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul
alive,*

3. But Lastly. A man may be said
to turn from his Wickedness when he
conveys Displeasure against it, and
fully purpotes never to return to it, a-
gain: whatever I expiations or Pro-
vocations he may meet withal. Other-
wise it may be but only Repentance
of the Act; unless a Man withdraws
from it through dislike, and takes up
Resolutions never to do the like. Now
if the wicked Man do thus I am away
from his Wickedness, and doubt that which
is lawful and right, he shall face his Sins
after.

THE END

THE PRAYER:

Some Parts of which were
ordinarily used by Dr. Whichcot
before Sermon.

A Almighty God, the Father of our Vol. I.
Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the
Spirits of all Flesh, we profess all De-
pendence upon Thee, we live in all Ex-
pectation from Thee. Awaken (we in-
treat Thee) all the Powers and Facul-
ties of our Souls to Acts of lively Sense
and Apprehension of Thee. Call us to due
Diligence and careful Attendance upon
Thee, that we may have our God highly
in Regard; that we may have great Re-
verence of Deity in our Minds; that we
may be in the Fear and Apprehension of
Thee while we are before Thee.

Put us (we humbly pray thee) upon
all those Acts towards Thee that ever
Thou madest us capable of, in the Mo-
ment

Vol. I.



ment of thy Creation of us ; that we may
duly acknowledge Thee, who art the Ori-
ginal of our Beings ; that we may great-
ly reverence Thee, who art the Father of
of our Spirits ; that we may obey Thee
fully, who art our Governour ; that we
may serve Thee freely, who art our Lord
and Owner ; that we may be thankful un-
to Thee, who art our great Benefactor ;
that we may admire and adore Thee, who
art a Being of all Perfection ; that we
may love and delight in Thee, who art
the first and chiefest Good ; that we may
place all Assurance, Trust, and Confidence
in Thee, because of thy gracious Promises ;
that we may come unto Thee, in Answer
to thy Invitation and Call ; that we may
believe Thee, who art most Certain and
Infallible ; that we may commit the great
Trust of our Souls unto Thee, because of
thy known Faithfulness to us ; that we
may rest in Thee, the Centre of Immortal
Spirits ; and ultimately refer to Thee, who
art the End of all Things ; and in the
Use of our Liberty, that we may present
thy Majesty with a Free-will Offering, and
bring unto Thee the Consent of our Minds ;
that so we may become altogether Thine ;
that as we are Thine by thy Creation of us,
by thy Maintenance, and Preservation, by
thy

thy constant Providence over us, by thy gracious assuming of us into a Relation to thy Self by thy Son, making us the Adoption of thy Grace; so we may be also Thine, by our voluntary Dedicating and Devoting our selves to thy Fear and Service.

2. To this purpose destroy out of us, whatever we have acquired Unnatural to the Principles of thy Creation of us, by abuse of our selves, by neglect of thy Grace, by compliance with the corrupt Guise of this sinful, degenerate, and apostate World. O naturalize us to Heaven, reconcile us to all the Things of that high Estate; that so we may not drudge in the World, nor act in a slavish Spirit in ways of Religion; but that we may serve Thee with Ingenuity of Mind, with Freedom of Spirit, as those that are set at Liberty, and delivered from the Bondage and Slavery of Iniquity, having the Law of the Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus, making us free from the Law of Sin and Death.

3. Blessed God, we have cause thankfully to acknowledge the Divine Goodness, for Thou hast loved our Souls from the Pit of Destruction; Thou hast laid help for us upon one that is Mighty, and every way able

Vol. I.  able to save; and hast declared thy Salvation, (God in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing Trespases :) Thou hast raised up for us a Prince and a Saviour to give Repentance to us, and Forgiveness of Sins. Now it is the Language of our Souls in the Ears of our God; make us partakers of that Salvation which Thou hast appointed, and which our Saviour has wrought, and our Souls shall bless Thee to Eternity.

4. To this purpose bring us within the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, (Repentance from dead Works, resolved Obedience in all things to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) and suffer us not herein to fail, or to fall short. Give us heartily and sincerely to revoke and undo whatsoever we have done amiss in Life; to condemn our selves for doing those things, to deprecate thy just Offence, and Displeasure; to cry Thee Mercy; to ask Thee Pardon; and for all time to come, to leave off to sin, and to return to our Duty.

5. And let us herein be Gainers by our former Losses, and Miscarriages; to make us more sensible of our Weakness and Inability, and of our necessary Dependence upon Thee our God; to be more thankful unto

unto Thee for thy gracious Interposure, in Vol. LV
 preventing of us from running into those
 Evils, that we have not committed; to
 be modest and humble in the Sense of
 our former Miscarriages; to be cautious
 and wary, that in time to come we do
 not transgress; and to make us more Cha-
 ritable and Compassionate to our Brethren,
 that in many things may have failed as
 well as we.

6. Give us carefully to hold the Head
 of the Church, and to make all due Acknow-
 ledgments to the Saviour of the Body
 Mystical; help us to conceive of Him, for
 the Height and Excellency of his Per-
 son; for the Worthiness and Fulness of
 his Undertaking, and Performance on
 our Behalf; according as we ought. Let
 us have that Dependence upon Him, that
 Expectation by Him, that Thou hast war-
 ranted us to have; and make that Use
 of Him, that Thou hast set Him up for;
 both that our Faith and Hope may final-
 ly rest in God; as also, that we may be
 planted into the Likeness of his Death by
 Mortification, Self-denial, Resignation;
 and may bear the Image of his Resurrection
 by Spirituality and Heavenly Mindedness;
 that so He may become a compleat Savi-
 our to us, we having Redemption through
 his

VOL. I. *his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins; and the Renovation of our Natures, by the Operation of his good Spirit.*

7. *Bring us we humbly pray Thee, to the Truth of a Creature-state, Humility, and Modesty: Cloath our Minds with that Humility that befits Creatures, with that Modesty that becomes Sinners. Suffer us not to be vainly fraught, nor possessed; to be giddily minded, or intoxicated with fond Conceits: O let us not live in a Lye, flatter our selves, deceiving our own Souls, promising that of our selves, or of any other Creature, that will not prove True.*

Help us all along in Life to subordinate all the Affairs and Transactions of Time, to serve the Interest of our Souls in the State that is before us. Help us to shake off this vain World, and to breath after Eternity, Immortality, and Glory; being in perfect Reconciliation with the Law of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness, and Truth; which are the Laws of Heaven: so shall we comply with thy Nature, Mind, and Will, and fully answer the Relation we stand in to Thee. Relieve and ease our Consciences, by the Blood of Sprinkling, according to our several Conditions of Body, and Mind; supply us with suitable Grace and Strength.

8. *We*

8. We are, O Lord, thy Care and Charge, Thou undertakest for us, we confess and acknowledge that we are in nothing Self-sufficient: Not wise enough for our own Direction, not able enough for our own Defence, nor yet good enough for our own Satisfaction. We came into Being at thy Call, and we continue in Being at thy Maintenance and Allowance, and we shall go out of these Beings which now we have, at thine Appointment, and it will not be in our Power to withhold our Souls from Thee one moment, though the State and Welfare of them to all Eternity did depend thereupon.

9. Help us therefore to acknowledge Thee in all our Ways, and not to lean to our own Understandings. Teach us, Blessed God, so to number our days, as to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and to mind those things which are in Conjunction with our everlasting Welfare. Take us out of an earthly, and a worldly Spirit, and give us Senses spiritually exercised, that we may savour and relish, judge and discern the Ways and Things of God. O, let us be always under thy Communication and Influence, so in the Light of thy Countenance attract and draw us to thy self, and stay us with Thee, and suffer

Vol. I. *W* suffer us never to depart from Thee, upon any Temptation, Provocation, or Suggestion whatsoever.

O Lord, communicate thy Light to our Minds, thy Life to our Souls; as Thou art Original to us by thy Creation of us, so be Thou also final by our Intention of Thee.

IO. Go over the Workmanship of thy Creation in us again: To mend all the defects we have contracted, and to destroy out of us by the working of thy Grace and Spirit, whatsoever we have acquired unnatural to thy Creation of us. Transform us into the Image of thy Son, conform us to his likeness, make us Body and Soul an Habitation for thy self, by thy Holy Spirit.

Make thy Son to us, all which Thou hast appointed Him to be unto Sinners. Make him to us Wisdom, that we who have played the fool by consenting to Iniquity, and giving our good God an Offence, may better understand our selves in the great Concernments of our Souls. Make Him to us Righteousness, that we may be out of Danger by reason of the deserved Punishment of our Sin. Make Him to us Sanctification, that we who have marred our Spirits and spoiled our Principles

The Prayer.

417

Vol. I. V

Principles by unnatural Use, may inwardly be made whole, and renewed in the Spirit of our Minds. Make Him to us Redemption, that we may be set at Liberty, and delivered from the Tyranny of Sin and Satan, who hath many times led us captive.

II. We thank Thee for the happy Terms of the Covenant of Grace; Terms that are good in themselves, and fit for thy creatures, such as our own Hearts cannot desire better, or other. For what is it that the Lord our God doth require of us, but only those things which are necessary to our everlasting Welfare? Neither hast Thou denied us any thing but that is for our Hurt and Prejudice. O, bring us unto thy good Terms, and suffer us not herein to fail, or fall short.

12. We bless Thee for that good Hand which Thou hast held over us by day and night, at home and abroad, alone and in company; that Thou hast put away all evil Things from us, and conferred many good Things upon us in great Kindness, Tenderness, and Compassion. For neither the evil Things that threatened us have not come at all, or if they have come, they have not continued so long as

VOL. I.

we suspected, nor have been so great as we imagined; or else thou hast overruled them, subdued and turned them unto good: and for good Things, Thou hast even transcended our Hopes, and exceeded our Expectations. O, be thou endeared and recommended to us by thy Goodness, Kindness, and Faithfulness; and let us be engaged unto Thee in Duty and Affection; that so with Choice and Delight we may live to that God by whom we live.

13. We thank Thee, that we have the Use of our Reason and Understanding in which many fail; that we have Power of self Enjoyment, and taking Content in our Lives; that thou hast given us Power to choose and determine our selves and that Thou hast permitted our Choice.

We acknowledge that if in any thing our Conditions are better or easier than the Conditions of those that are most miserable and necessitous, that herein thy Goodness of the Lord our God hath been extended towards us; for we have used our selves as venturously, and run as many Hazards as others; and but for thy gracious Interposure, we might have been as miserable as others.

14. Acquaint us, Blessed God, in the day of our Exercise, Probation and Tryal

with

with the Employment of Eternity, (Con-
 versation with our God by holy Medita-
 tion, by heavenly Ejaculations, by constant
 Intention of God, his Honour, and Ser-
 vice; by exact walking according to the
 Difference of Good and Evil; and by
 frequent Application to Thee by Prayer,
 and all other holy Exercises;) That so when
 these frail Bodies of ours shall fall away,
 and tumble into the Dust, and leave our
 Souls alone, and when there shall be no
 more either of bodily Employment, or Con-
 cernment: That our Souls may then rea-
 dily adjoin themselves unto those immedi-
 ate Attendants upon God, the Angels and
 Saints in Glory; and in that Blessed
 Consort spend Eternity, in singing Praises
 and Hallelujahs to that God, of whose
 Grace and Goodness we have had so
 great Experience all along in Life.

15. Help us so to order our Conver-
 sation in the World; so to govern our
 Spirits, and to lead such Lives, upon which
 we may safely dye; and when we shall
 come to leave the World, afford us such
 a mighty Power and Presence of thy own
 good Spirit, that we may have solid Con-
 solation in Believing, and depart in the
 Faith of God's Elect. That we may escape
 the dreadful Pangs of Death, all Con-

Vol. I.

sternation of Mind, all Confusion of Thoughts, all Doubtfulness and Uncertainty concerning our everlasting Condition; that so we may chearfully follow Thee into the Estate on the other side Death, of which thou hast given us so great Assurance by the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel, and who hath promised to change these our vile Bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working of his mighty Power, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself: And, Lord, give us in the mean time in Faith and Patience to possess our Souls.

16. We are daily admonished, as by Years growing upon some of us, so by Experience and Observation abroad every day, one or other taken away from our Society, Converse and Acquaintance; And sometimes Persons of fewer Years, and of greater Strength, and more likely to live than our selves: Neither do we know how it comes to pass that we survive them; nor how long it will be, e'er we shall follow them; nor yet what manner of Diseases may be gathering together, these base and vile Bodies of ours, which thou

though we feel them not to day, may appear to morrow. Lord, keep us in Consideration hereof, and the Reference of Time to Eternity, to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and to mind those things that are in Conjunction with our everlasting Welfare.

17. And superadd this to all the Grace and Favour Thou hast shewn us all along in Life, not to remove us hence, but with all Advantage for Eternity; when we shall be in a due Preparation of Mind, in a holy Disposition of Soul, in a perfect Renunciation of the Guise of this mad and sinful World; when we shall be intirely resigned up unto Thee our God; when we shall have clear Acts of Faith in God by Jesus Christ in our Souls; high and reverential Thoughts of Thee in our Minds; enlarged and enflamed Affections towards Thee.

18. Wherefore, Blessed God, consummate the Work of thy Grace which Thou hast begun in our Souls; and then when Thou shalt have brought us to Glory, we who through our Earthlinefs, Carnality, and Folly, have been weary of a little Attendance upon Thee, in Time; shall think Eternity it self too streight and too narrow for us to bless and magnifie

Vol. I. *so good a God, so well deserving at our Hands.*

19. Do good unto the whole World, recover thy lapsed Creation, compassionate the forlorn Condition of Mankind, lost in themselves, and lost to God, through Ignorance, Stupidity, and Senselessness, where Persons have never been awakened; through Superstition, Idolatry, and False worship, wherein many have been nursed up and bred; through Atheism, Dissoluteness, and Prophaneness, whereby they have made havock of Conscience,

20. O, Let the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ break forth and shine throughout the whole World: Fulfil the Promise Thou hast made unto the Messiah, that Thou wilt give Him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost Parts of the Earth for his Possession: That the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and that the Leopard shall lye down with the Kid, the Calf and the young Lyon and the Fatling together; that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all thy holy Mountain: But that there may be a perfect dwelling together in Love, Harmony, and Reconciliation with the whole Creation,

The Prayer.

423

VOL. I.

21. Reform all things amiss in these Kingdoms: Controul Atheism, Irreligion, and Prophaneness: Establish Peace, Truth, and Righteousness: Frustrate all naughty Designs: Suffer us not to be hurried back again to Popery, Superstition, or any false Worship; but settle us in the Purity of our Religion, and our just Rights.

Restrain the Sons of Violence, that turn all into Confusion, and that make Havock and Desolation in the Family of God.

22. Direct him whom Thou hast placed in the Throne, &c. Furnish him with all Divine Gifts and Graces that may sanctifie his Soul here, and save him hereafter. Bless him and us in all his Royal Family, &c.

23. Compassionate all in Misery and Affliction; especially such whose Cases we are acquainted with: Comfort, help, and restore; O Lord, be Thou a present Help to them in any needful time of Trouble: Such as lye upon sick Beds, direct those that are about them to proper and fit Means for their Recovery, and add thy Blessing: Take not them nor us out of this State, till Thou hast fitted and qualified us for the State of Immortality, Eternity and Glory.

E e 4

24. Assist

24. Assist us now in the Service we are met to perform, that we beginning in the Name and Fear of God, may be promoted by Divine Assistance, encouraged by thy Acceptance, and end in thy Glory, and the Advantage of our immortal Souls:

Grant that what shall be now spoken according to thy Will, may be received as from thy self, and turned to the Information of our Understandings, wherein any of us have been mistaken; the refining of our Spirits; the right ordering the Actions of our Lives and Conversations; that God in all things may be glorified; and our Souls finally saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are bold to call Thee Father, &c.



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